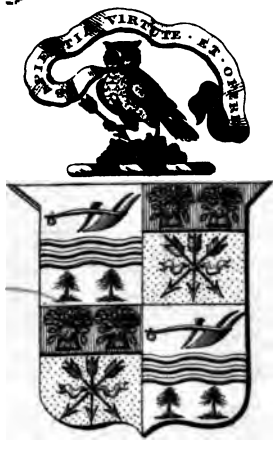

Richard Norris.

EWELLIN:

A TALE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LLEWELLIN:

A TALE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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LLEWELLIN:

A TALE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

HUMBLY DEDICATED IN POETICAL ADDRESS TO

HER ROYAL HIGHNESS

THE PRINCESS CHARLOTTE AUGUSTA

OF WALES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

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1799.

DEDICATION,

IN POETICAL ADDRESS,

TO HER ROYAL HIGHNESS

THE PRINCESS CHARLOTTE AUGUSTA OF WALES.

ILLUSTRIOUS Babe,* with smiles my wishes meet,
To lay these numbers at thy royal feet.
Unconscious of my boon, thy cherub face
Beams the full cheering ray of infant grace:
Untaught thy heart to bid thy tongue deny,
For kind assent sits tranquil in thine eye;
The turning leaf thy little hand employs;
Distinguish'd is my gift from other toys.
Tho' dimpling fancies o'er thy features rove,
There all is harmony, and all is love.
A stranger to our world and every ill;
To such, Oh may'st thou be a stranger still!
No added cares thy onward life shou'd know,
And may the sand, as now, serenely flow:
Thought, newly born, is breaking into day,
And twilight sense emits a feeble ray.
Is human comprehension's seat yet fill'd,
Thou angel herald of the coming child?

---

* This was written in September 1796, her Royal Highness being then eight months old.

Thro' bud and bloom the roseate hours shall bring
Thy blameless life to joys of frolic Spring;
Then hints from blushing modesty allay
The fervid glee of over-jocund May:
And sage Discretion now a question asks,
And grave Instruction sets the rigid tasks;
Enamour'd Science courts thee to the book,
And Knowledge lends her all-attractive look.
Tho' bright in outward ornament you shine,
Stor'd in the mind, each useful good is thine.
As in the mazy dance you smoothly glide,
The Graces view, and boast their darling pride;
And if the theme amongst the schools you chuse,
"I taught the maid!" cries each exulting Muse.

A fond idea rises, but, how vain!
A source to me of pleasure and of pain:
Yet fancied hopes the lov'd illusion lead—
This book, AUGUSTA, may by thee be read:
And thou, clear radiance of a brighter age,
Mayst throw a lustre on my homely page.
Yet wilt thou bid the polish'd circle see
The wondrous book that was inscrib'd to thee!
Then small the danger that I have to dread,
If, for the act, a good intent can plead.
Of worldly wisdom scanty is my share;
Unripen'd yet the character I bear;
Plain simple truths I venture to impart,
They come, sweet babe! in precepts from the heart.
Design'd a wholesome moral—to improve—
A novel new—for scarce one word of love!

Here rolling Passions whirl their rapid round,
Yet dulcet Love's not in the circle found.
" No myrtle in the chaplet! Oh, for shame!
" No love!" I hear the tender sex exclaim.
For this omission censure! Sure 'tis hard;
I quote example from a pleasing bard:
Tho' to the passions he attun'd the string,
Yet not of love did gentle Collins sing.

Thus form'd, shou'd Fortune call thee to a throne,
Sweet maid, may Virtue claim thee all her own!
A Sov'reign thou, by others ne'er command,
But prove thyself the guardian of the land:
Ne'er from thy awful charge, thro' ease, retire,
Or let Ambition, Fraud, or Pride conspire
To drive thee from the hearts where thou hast reign'd;
Crowns lost in hearts can never be regain'd:
Weak Edward thus, his minion's easy tool,
A victim fell to Gaveston's misrule.

Celestial minstrelsy attune the lyre!
The gladd'ning theme prophetic hopes inspire;
AUGUSTA must be bless'd, GEORGE is AUGUSTA'S Sire!

To him not flattery's venal knee shall bend;
Friend he's to all, and each is GEORGE's friend.
Thy princely father joins the busy throng,
And right can chuse, by seeing what is wrong:
Studies in ease supine, or bustling strife,
By living letters in the book of life,

Whene'er it comes (far distant be that day !)
He knows o'er whom, and well knows how to sway.

Thy Royal Mother, too—I cannot praise,
There, weak the efforts of my humble lays !
A beauteous mansion was her form design'd,
A fit abode for an angelic mind.
As her's, inherent, is thy soul endued
With all the pure simplicity of good.
Not thine, supreme, in courts a lot to boast,
Then courts shall strive who may deserve thee most.

Example shines thy clear unerring guide,
To kindred virtues thou art near allied.
At Oatlands Bounty holds her honour'd reign;
In Windsor shades fair stands her hallow'd fane.

Sound is the root, and firm the royal tree,
That branch the honours of thy pedigree:
Thick is the spreading umbrage of its leaves,
And kind the balmy shelter which it gives.
Thy father's sire! Oh, worthy of command !
Who can at once protect and bless the land;
The man in private, king in public trust,
Majestic, plain, and merciful as just.
Alike his consort, not less good than great,
A home her palace, comfort is her state.
Of this all-lov'd and venerated pair,
Thou art the blooming hope, the blossom fair.

Now let me more than ev'ry good suppose,
And prescience all its treasur'd lore disclose.
Thy bending course is thro' a flow'ry mead,
And Virtue shall thy certain footsteps lead.
In youth, joys short of rapture scarce can please;
Age finds contentment in the sweets of ease.
With Hybla's honey shall thy cup o'erflow,
And calm reflection shall the bliss bestow:
No cherish'd ill that mem'ry wou'd pass by,
Nor slighted good remember'd with a sigh.
Then white-rob'd Truth shall crown thy fading days
With vivid flowers, and thus record thy praise:
"Materials rich and great to thee were giv'n,
"With these thou well hast wrought a glorious work
for Heav'n."

London, Sept. 1796.

CONTENTS

OF

THE FIRST VOLUME.

LLEWELLIN.

CHAP. I.

A HIGHLAND CHIEF.

* * * * * * * * * * * * * *
* * * * * * * * * * * * * *
* * * * * THUS far, Chaucer, have I detailed to you the private transactions of the first Edward's reign. You have before you the commencement and progress of that attachment which subsisted between the heir to England's crown and my father Gaveston. Begin you to be weary? or will you suffer me still to conduct your attention through the chequered paths of my hapless pilgrimage? I hear you claim the fulfil-

ment of my promise. Your request is by me held sacred; and, though retrospection inflicts pangs nearly equal to those that wrung my heart at every mournful hour, yet will I proceed. But I mean not by this to infer that the shade of misfortune invariably hung over my gone days: no, not so; equally are distributed ills and blessings: the former I merited, the latter I enjoyed. What most reconciles me to my presumption, in submitting these pages, unadorned with any grace but truth, to you, my learned friend, is the reflection that they may introduce to your observance the characters of personages whose memory, else, might rest in oblivion. Here shall you find Guilt in its most hideous form; here shall you also meet Virtue, her traits bedecked with her loveliest smiles.

What think you, Chaucer? are you still in the mind to give this rude, un-

lettered narrative to the world, when on it you have bestowed the elegance of that polish ever flowing from your pen? Then take it. When affairs of weight claim not your attention, it may be to you, as ideas revolve in much needful correction, a lowly exercise in the language. You opened to me your wish —I have acceded—this is the sketch you required; therefore read it not with the scrupulous eye of examination, but with the friendly conviction that the attempt, though humble, was solely undertaken at your desire.

The subjects gazing on the breathless corpse of the first Edward bade adieu to the glory and majesty of England! Their fears were but too well grounded; for scarce was it deposited with its kindred dust, when the young Monarch of Caernarvon, regardless of the oath given to his father at his death, recalled his favourite Pierce of Gave-

ton, whom he created Earl of Cornwall, Treasurer of England, and sole Regent of the realm, on himself crossing to France, to espouse Isabel, daughter of the French King. At his return he appointed him Lord High Chamberlain, to which exalted place he had previously annexed many rich grants; and, in short, lavished on Gaveston the thirty thousand marks left by Edward the First for the prosecution of the crusade.

The coronation over, at which Lord Cornwall bore St. Edward the Confessor's crown, the highest honour that could be conferred on a subject, he united him to Margaret, the daughter of his kinsman, the Earl of Gloucester.

Ere long the smothered resentment of the Barons again burst forth on their perjured Sovereign, and compelled my father to seek refuge in France, from

whence he was driven by the command of Philip. The wretched fugitive retired to the Netherlands; but envy and persecution still pursuing him, he at length, in despair, ventured to Britain, where he was received by the King with rapture and open arms; but by the Lords with frowns, contempt, and threats. Notwithstanding the endeavours of his enemies to the contrary, he kept his ground in England several months, at the end of which time he buried his wife, Margaret, who left him a daughter; but, alas! he was not long permitted to enjoy the infantine caresses of his offspring. A powerful Noble, the Earl of Warwick, rose, and headed the exasperated Barons. They marched to London, and, with rebellious audacity, peremptorily demanded Gaveston's banishment or Edward's abdication.

My father, alarmed at the danger that threatened his royal friend, fled to Ire-

land. This step of prudence and necessity had its effect; the Nobles laid down their arms, and returned to their obedience. The infatuated Monarch perceiving this, recalled from Ireland the Earl of Hereford, the then Lord Justice, proclaimed Gaveston his successor in the Vice-royalty, and sent him money and forces to make good his title: but, after many violent struggles of the favourite to keep his exalted station, he was, by the inveterate rancour of the English Peers, forced to fly even from thence. All Edward's endeavours to find him proved fruitless. When hope itself had failed, he did not doubt but that the vengeance of the Barons was at last compleated. At first his grief was inconsolable, but time and reason proved a balm to the poignancy of his sorrow; he became resigned to what he could not remedy, and resolved to transfer, with a liberal hand, all his care and ten-

derness to the orphan children of his lamented Gaveston. We were baptized at Sheene, by the names of Alfred and Emma, and publicly recognized as the adopted of our Sovereign.

The Queen also had ever borne an aversion to Gaveston; and now, supposing that that triumphant monarch, Death, had snatched him from her power, she resolved still that her malice should not be disappointed; her heart was a sterile spot, where humanity had never taken root. A plan was now forming in her breast to destroy two innocent babes on beholding them enjoy the smiles and protection of her childless husband. She employed a young man, a fit agent in such a scheme, to decoy us to Woodstock, with design that it should prove our grave. By some means their plan, though artful and well laid, reached Edward's ear, who determined instantly to baffle it, by

sending us secretly to Bruce, of Scotland, with whom he was then on amicable terms. Our grandsire Gloucester, my infant sister, and myself, attended the King's commands privately in his closet. 'Gloucester,' said he, 'the children of my lost Gaveston are torn from me by Isabel; take them to our brother of Scotland, tell him I implore his aid in protecting these infants till I can demand them with safety to themselves. Be loyal, be just. Regard them as the offspring of thy daughter.'

The Earl swore fidelity, then hastened from the drooping Edward's presence, to make instant, but secret preparations for our quitting England. Although caution prompted him to take but one attendant, yet, ultimately, it proved an imprudent measure. The appointed time arrived, Gloucester took leave of the sorrowful King, promising to return at a certain period.

Our childish prattle, and remarks on whatever struck our fancy, delighted the Earl, and served to beguile the else tedious and melancholy journey of fourteen days, in the depth of winter. The morning of the fifteenth, imagine his consternation at missing the domestic that had attended him from England; all his enquiries were answered unsatisfactorily, and fruitless were the repeated searches he caused to be made. Overwhelmed with doubts and fears, he tarried at the house where he had slept the preceding night, deliberating whether he should proceed to Ross or return to England. His reflections were disturbed by the entrance of a peasant, who, with respect, humbly offered his services, and begged that the Earl would permit him to take the charge of the children. The credulous Gloucester caught the bait, and, without the smallest hesitation, complied. The day being far advanced, he postponed the

continuation of his journey till the next morning. We rose early; my sister and myself were placed on the saddle of the stranger's horse. Gloucester rode before, far from suspecting to whom he had entrusted his precious charge.—Whether it was boyish forwardness or instinct that warned me of approaching danger, I know not; but, on looking up in the peasant's face, where ferocity was strongly depicted, I cried out, and struggled to get from him. The Earl instantly returned, and, affectionately fondling me, regardless of the man's urgent entreaties to let us remain with him, took us both, and having seated us on his own horse, continued his route, desiring his new domestic to follow.

Whilst crossing a field of heath, thro' which the road lay, the sound of a well-known voice struck upon Gloucester's ear; he turned, and beheld with asto-

nishment his former attendant and the peasant, who had lingered behind, in close conference, with drawn daggers in their hands; a dreadful conviction of the truth glanced across his mind; he clapped spurs to his horse, but had not gone far ere he fell from his saddle, stabbed by the two ruffians, who eagerly snatched their prize from his helpless arms, and left the victim of their treachery weltering n blood. But Providence saw the deed, and revenged the murdered Earl: a loud whistle vibrated in the ears of the terrified assassins, and in an instant the whole surface of the field appeared in motion. A band of Highlanders, who had been wrapped in their plaids (so like in colour to their heathy bed that they could not be distinguished) started up, rushed on the fear-struck flying villains, tore us from their grasp, and seized the three horses. Having stripped the

ruffians, they left them wounded, and, as they supposed, lifeless.

These formed part of a ferocious body of free-booters, inhabiting the Scottish Western Isles; the head of their clan, Macdonald, had often attempted to humanize and subject them to his power; but repeated skirmishes convinced him that their savage wildness was out of the reach of civilization.—Our youth and innocence wrought compassion in hearts to which perhaps, till then, it was unknown; tempted by its valuable appearance, they divested us of every ornamental part of our dress, and agreed, as a sort of peace-offering, to present us to their Laird, who, possessed of grea twealth, had no children of his own. This venerable chieftain was gentle and humane; he seemed charmed with us, and, without further hesitation or much enquiry, professed himself our father and protector.

Emma, though transplanted from the most accomplished court in Europe to these remote and dreary isles, bloomed and flourished: with all the delicacy, she escaped the affectation and indolence of court-bred ladies: she ran races with her companions, and, indeed, was the foremost in all their rustic pastimes. At a proper age our benefactor placed her at a nunnery in Icolmkill, and me at a neighbouring monastery, where I became hardy and vigorous, was early inured to every labour, and, let a grief-worn veteran boast it now, distinguished myself above most of my competitors in athletic feats.

It was an annual custom of Macdonald to sit at the head of his clan, in an amphitheatre formed for the purpose at Taliskar, in the Isle of Sky, to behold our games, running, wrestling, swimming, shooting with cross-bows, and a variety of other exercises; these

concluded, with his more estimable commendations he distributed the several prizes to the victors, who were carried in triumph, to do the honours of an entertainment given by our friend and patron.

Gloucester, unseen by the banditti, was left bleeding on the heath, and, in this situation was discovered by a Highlander, on his way from Sky to Ross, to purchase implements of husbandry. The benevolent countryman had him conveyed across to Mull, and administered every comfort that his slender means could procure. Clanronald, the name of this charitable peasant, was a favourite of Douglas, the island's chief, and much esteemed by him from his never having joined the hordes of plundering foragers. He lived upon the bounty of his Lord, and the produce of a small but well- cultivated farm.—

Here the Earl remained several weeks in a pitiable state, from his wounds, the anguish of which threw him into a fever; and this malady was heightened by his host's unwarily saying that it was reported we had both been seized and murdered by the lawless clan. Gloucester did not dare return to Edward, who, regardless of the Earl's consanguinity to us, might, from the tenacity of his own disposition, particularly where Gaveston was concerned, suspect him of treachery, consequently his first rage would prove ungovernable. After mature reflection, he borrowed an Highland dress, and leaving his suit of mail with intention in time to reclaim it, took leave of the hospitable Scotsman, and set out on a ramble through the kingdom, determined on not revealing himself till Edward discovered, by some other means, the children's death.

Suffer me now to mention what became of Isabel's cruel agents, Guerney and Maltravers; they fled to their base protectress, then at York, who, though enraged at the failure of their enterprize, still cherished the inhuman hope that we had fallen victims to the Highlanders' ferocity. To screen her confederate instruments, she carefully circulated a report that the Earl of Gloucester died on his return to England. This deceived all, but especially the King, who, however, did not doubt but that he had safely deposited his young charge with Bruce.

Thus passed eleven years. During that time several messengers were dispatched secretly to Scotland for tidings of us, but all Edward's endeavours to procure *genuine* information were frustrated by the machinations of the wily Isabel.

The period now approached when we were to emerge into the world. Edward, persuading himself that he could venture a long wished-for sight of his adopted children, wrote to the Scots Monarch, thanking him for his generous condescension, and begging him to send us both to England immediately. This letter came to Bruce's hand, who, surprized at the incomprehensible request, returned for answer, that he had never seen the Earl of Gloucester, neither had he received any children in trust from him. Several couriers passed between the two Princes; yet their embassies were so inexplicable, that neither party could comprehend what the other aimed at. This mutual misunderstanding grew serious. Edward, provoked at Bruce's supposed prevarication, concluding he had joined Isabel and the disaffected Barons, and, to please them, had sacrificed us, declared war against him, with a de-

termination to support Baliol's pretensions to the throne of Scotland. Thus did he make a public cause subservient to his private resentment. Forces were instantly levied on both sides; the English marched against the frontiers of Scotland, whilst the justly exasperated Bruce made formidable preparations, as his crown was now at stake. He led his army towards Bannockburn, to stop the ravages Edward's troops had already commenced. The Scots Monarch, on a careful examination of the ground, chose a field, with an hill on the right, a deep morass on the left, and a river in the front. On the banks he caused pits to be dug, crossed over with thin laths, and covered by a layer of turf; these were intended as gins to entrap the cavalry of the enemy.

Myself, and some other youths, were at our exercises when this important news arrived at Sky, and presently we

saw pass, to embark in boats for the opposite shore, Macdonald's clan, compleatly armed and equipped. He himself was incapable of heading them, on account of an illness that had confined him to his room several months before. The above sight operated like magic on myself and my companions; we dispersed, and flew to our several parents, to ask permission to accompany the martial Highlanders. Macdonald checked me, and sternly forbid me to repeat the request. Surprized and disappointed, I stood in suspence a few minutes, deliberating on what I should do. The conflict in my mind was powerful, between obedience to my reputed parent, and ardour to fight for my country and my sovereign, as I conceived such the cause to be: at length desire of glory conquered; I seized my bow and quiver, and, flying over the plain, soon reached the beach, where I was joined by my friend

Far
looked
rtly on

whose account Edward had declared war. He kissed the foreheads of a few of us affectionately, and ordered us to our post, behind the hill, on the right of his army. In case the Scots should give way, we were to shout, and endeavour to terrify the enemy by displaying our banners.

We were all under fifteen; I was then twelve; yet, from being, as they imagined, the Laird's son, was chosen commander in chief of this formidable group, which amounted to between four and five hundred. We pitched tents in a field appropriated to our sole use, fortified it round, and placed sentinels at the respective points. Not one of us could close our eyes the night preceding the battle, for thinking of the mighty deeds we should perform ere the setting sun. At break of day my raw head-strong comrades arranged themselves in ranks; and I, to imitate

what I had read in ancient history, commanded silence, and made an oration to my undisciplined soldiers, at the close of which they threw up their bonnets, and rent the air with cries of 'Bruce! Macdonald! and Scotland!' At the call to arms we crept to our post, and, crouching down, looked with the most eager attention on the action which, though sanguinary, appeared tremendous to us striplings. I beheld Bruce flying from rank to rank, animating the soldiers; then with an arm, nerved by despair at his inferiority of numbers, he hewed down all that opposed him. I saw him engaged, hand to hand, with Edward, whom we had been taught to distinguish by his towering crest, and soon after snatch a battle-axe, approach Sir Humphrey De Bohun, the General, and with Herculean force cleave his skull, which so much discouraged the English, that, turning to fly, hundreds fell into the snares laid

by the Scots; this, however, served but to re-kindle their fury; they faced, and fiercely charged the enemy: after a severe conflict Edward appeared to be gaining the advantage. In vain Bruce rallied the forces; in vain he acted the hero; the Scots broke their ranks and retreated: this was the signal for my troops; we crept to the top of Bannockburn-hill, and then, with amazing velocity, rushed down, shouting and clashing our arms. The Scots now faced and attacked in their turn. The English, taking us for reinforcements, fled with Edward to Stirling, pursued by the triumphant foe.

In the midst of the havock, confusion, and slaughter occasioned by such a sudden charge, I observed an English soldier, who had fallen into one of the pits, and seemed so weak and bruised, that he had not power to rise. I looked around, and shuddered with an invo-

luntary emotion of horror on perceiving an arrow levelled at his breast by one of my young comrades. The bow bent! the dart flew! I advanced my buckler, and received on it the intended death: but, on recollection of the singularity of the deed, glowing with shame, I was about to leave the Englishman to his fate, had not humanity (whose dictates I considered it my first duty to obey) urged me not (though consistent with the laws of war) to abandon a feeble helpless man to the nervous arm of the vigorous soldier. I turned, and tendered my hand, that he might rise; he did, though with the greatest difficulty. He accepted my offer of conducting him from the field, and I led him behind our hill, assured that there he could rest in safety. When we reached the spot, fatigue, together with his fall, had so far overpowered him, that he fainted. I put up his beaver to give him air; and, with sur-

prize, beheld a face which wrinkles and complexion proclaimed to have seen above seventy years. I unbuckled his helmet, and ran with it to the river for water. The engagement, at this instant, was at its height; hundreds fell on every side; death and carnage hovered over the fatal spot; spears, darts, and arrows whizzed around me; but I saw, I feared nothing, and only thought of relieving the Englishman. When I returned, he was recovered from his swoon, but he seemed still languid; the water, however, restored his spirits, at which I expressed the greatest rapture. My voice struck him, he looked up, and with astonishment gazed at his deliverer; for, though he had seen what passed, yet he had not before taken particular notice of my person. Now, when he expected to pour forth his gratitude to an English soldier, he beheld a little Highlander, with a qui-

ver at his back, and a small bow strung across his shoulder.

This venerable old warrior, whose life I had most probably saved, was the Earl of Gloucester! my then unknown grandsire. On the rumour of a war, notwithstanding his advanced age, he scorned to remain inactive, but reclaimed his arms from Clanronald, and, unknown to Edward, joined the English forces. The Earl being recovered from his extreme surprize, asked me if I knew on what account England had declared war? I related the whole in the Erse language, as I had heard it mentioned to Macdonald: that Edward had sent two young children to Bruce, who were suspected, by his disclaiming all knowledge of them, to have been made away with. Little did I suppose, that I was the hero of my tale! During my artless narra-

tion, Gloucester appeared agitated, and blamed himself as the cause of this bloodshed, by his omission of undeceiving Edward.

The action by this time being over, and the victorious Scots withdrawing to their tents, Gloucester and I separated; he went towards Stirling, and I joined my young troops. We were a a second time presented to Bruce, who publicly declared, that the victory of Bannockburn was due to us, and that Scotland owed her independence to the brilliant exertion of patriotism displayed by her young defenders. Six, among whom I was one, were created upon the spot Knights Bannerets of the Field; the rest received divers military tokens, as a reward for the youthful ardour they had shewn throughout the battle, in which, alas! many of my brave companions had fallen. Among the slain I discovered the features of

Maclean. Although I loved the boy, yet, judging sensibility to be totally incompatible with a soldier's heroism, I stifled a sigh, brushed away a falling tear, and in an authoritative voice, issued my commands for the order of the funeral. We cut down branches of trees, and forming biers, conveyed the bodies to the Isle of Sky.

A spot of ground was chosen for the graves in that part of our amphitheatre, at Dunvegan, where stood an abbey, dedicated to St. Etheldred, called by the peasants St. Audry's. The burial service was performed by the brothers of the house, with all solemnity: we saw the remains of our noble comrades deposited in the earth, which, by means of turf and stones, rose to stately altars six feet above the surface; then arranging ourselves in ranks, we shot our arrows over the tomb. The ceremony closed with my being hailed

King, and crowned by the hand of young Macleod with a wreath of laurel.

As we were parting, to return to our respective homes, we saw advancing towards us Emma, at the head of her Highland playmates, clad in loose white robes, fancifully decorated with garlands of the choicest flowers.—My sweet sister welcomed me back from the field, and stepping forward, gracefully dropped a wreath of roses on my crown of evergreen. Immediately every youth received a chaplet from a smiling girl, whilst our relatives, in a transport of ecstacy, thronged to the spot, and blessed us as the saviours of their country.

CHAP. II.

THE ASSASSIN.

GLOUCESTER having related the particulars of his nine years pilgrimage to the King, he, convinced that he had wronged Bruce, the next day made concessions, and sued for peace. Had the two Monarchs been but timely explicit, and preserved less punctilious hauteur of ambiguity in their correspondence, the blood of six or seven hundred men, who had no part in the cause, might have been spared; but now, when the field is strewed with the mangled bodies of the slain, and numbers languish under careless wounds, or writhe beneath the excruciating tortures of amputation or the probe, the one Prince says most graciously to his brother, 'Pardon me,

Royal Bruce, some mistake existed between us; I grieve that a trivial matter should have produced a breach in our amity—let us be friends.' An interview was appointed between the two Monarchs on a plain near Stirling. Magnificent thrones were prepared, and on each side platforms were erected for the convenience of the nobles: behind the Princes, at some distance, stood, in battle array, the remains of their respective forces. Bruce ordered my little army to take the precedence of his, and be placed next his person, as the victory, he was pleased to alledge, was unquestionably ours. Observing the laurel wreath, entwined with roses, that decked my brows, and the deference my companions paid to me, and on being told that I was their leader in war and king in peace, he, smiling, called me brother; and desired me, during the ceremonies, to share his throne.

The peace ratified, Gloucester, advancing to Bruce, exchanged with him a few words; then taking me by the hand, led me to the English King, to whom he presented me as his preserver. Edward looked on my lineaments attentively, and turning to Gloucester, in a half whisper, said, 'Is he not like unto Gaveston?' The Earl, now struck himself with the resemblance, asked of Macdonald whether I was his son? My foster-father, after a few moments silence and evident perturbation, replied, I was not; that I had been brought to him by his clan, together with that female child (pointing to my sister, who could not be prevailed on to leave me); and that our names, as we lisped them ourselves, were Alfred and Emma. Scarce were the words pronounced, than Edward, with breathless agitation, sprung from his seat, and clasped us in his arms; but Gloucester, alarmed, lest the English Lords

should discover in us the offspring of the hated favourite, and so meditate plans for our certain destruction, pretending to share his joy, snatched us from him. Neither Bruce nor Macdonald beheld this scene unconcerned: the former congratulated Edward on finding us, but the aged Laird sat silent, apparently absorbed in sorrow. Perceiving it, and flattering myself with the cause, I ran to him, and fervently kissing his hand; declared neither of us would ever forsake him. He tenderly thanked me, but advised me to obey my Prince, and follow him wheresoever he willed: the only compensation he required for his care, in our bringing up, was often to send him tidings of us; and, added he, 'I know, my child, the splendour of a Court will not obliterate from your tender mind the remembrance of your supposed father, or the many happy days of rustic simplicity you have enjoyed at Ta-

liskar, in Sky.' I gave him a faithful heart-felt promise of comfort, of which his speedy death frustrated the accomplishment. Edward and Gloucester, now advancing, our beloved benefactor received their thanks, and a pressing invitation to accompany us to England; but he answered, he was an old man, and must die in his own country.

In my kingly capacity, with much grief, I bade adieu to my sorrowful subjects. Emma took leave of her female associates, and we quitted the peaceful Hebrides, for the bustling pomp and grandeur of a Court. Emma often cast her streaming eyes back to the spot, the scene of early childhood, where we had truly tasted the sweet and real delights of innocence and health.

When we reached London, Isabel's hatred to my father recurring to the King's mind, he judged it expedient

that our birth should still remain secret, to avoid the evils that might fall upon us, were we publicly known to be the children of Gaveston: we were introduced as brother and sister wards, consigned to Gloucester's care by a deceased Scottish gentleman of the name of Fitzarthur. But to hasten to affairs of riper importance.

We were sitting one evening in the King's study at the palace of Windsor: Gloucester was listening attentively to me reading. Emma, and the young Lady Blanche, the Earl of Lancaster's daughter, assisted in weaving a suit of hangings designed for the Queen's state-bed, and Edward sat opposite, with a book in his hand, but his eye often on me, and, as I now conclude, his thoughts on my unhappy father; when an officer in waiting announced Lord Henry Montford, as returned from Spain. On his entrance he was received by the

King and Earl with every mark of affection. The shuttle fell from the hand of Blanche at the mention of his name, and, at sight of him, she ran and welcomed her long absent brother. Emma and I being strangers, hung back with rustic bashfulness; but my eyes were fixed on this princely youth, whom I contemplated with admiration: he appeared to be about fourteen years of age; his person was tall, rather majestic and commanding than graceful, yet in him this seemed a perfection; dark brown hair fell in large ringlets round his face, and rested on his shoulders: although his features were expressive of sweetness and humanity, yet a certain haughty fire in his eye demanded respect rather than attracted love; a rich and costly dress gave lustre to the elegance of his form; his rose-coloured satin vest was fastened by a silver belt, from which depended a small sword, studded with jewels.

The King advanced, and beckoning me forward, took both our hands, and joined them, saying, 'Here, Henry, is a companion for you; learn to value each other, and when Edward and Gloucester are no more, may my Cousin Montford be the friend of, I fear, the persecuted Fitzarthur!' From this period a remarkable congeniality of mind and disposition gave our Sovereign's commands all the pleasing effects of inclination with a sort of sympathy: we prosecuted our studies in an equality of rapid improvement. My young heart scorned the cool and selfish maxims of prudence, and revealed its most secret recesses to Montford, for our friendship admitted not of reserve. Soon was he acquainted with my real name, quality, and every circumstance of my birth. In the most generous warmth of liberal intimacy, the two young females kept pace with us; and

I doubt if Emma, at a secret, possessed more discretion than her brother.

Henry and myself, together with several youths of distinction, were sent by the King to pursue and finish our studies at Paris, that city being then the general resort of noblemen of all nations to perfect themselves in arts and chivalry.

Six years glided away in the arduous acquisition of those accomplishments, during which the Earl of Lancaster, Montford's father, had placed a young man, remarkable for all the graces of external endowments, near Edward's person. The weak Monarch, ever caught by fair semblance, conferred on the gallant, gay, and volatile Hugh D'Spencer, exalted honours, admitted him to his esteem and confidence; and ere long, this rising Phœnix extin-

guished the last spark of affection remaining in the breast of the fickle Edward for his once much prized Gaveston. D'Spencer succeeded to his predecessor's pride and ambition; but without possessing one of his many virtues; his mind was truly base; add to this a dauntless effrontery, by which he could meditate crimes with a placid smiling countenance. Never could a Court boast of such a consummate hypocrite as this new favourite! much did he differ from his father, who had in vain endeavoured to check the rising depravity that marked the morals of his degenerate son, even from childhood, and to infuse into his expanding mind a detestation of vice, by his own excellent example! Strange, that such reverse of character should tend to the same point, the Monarch's favour! No sooner was Edward's prepossession to the D'Spencers become manifest, than the long dormant jealousy and indig-

nation against their King's evil counsellors, awoke in the breast of Warwick and the Barons; they rashly confounded their name, and resolved that the virtuous father should fall in the tempest of destruction with which they threatened to overwhelm his arrogant son.

Of young D'Spencer's claims to Edward's favour, his ready wit was not the least powerful; this being of the sarcastic kind, whilst it pleased the King, on whom he dared not turn it, seldom failed to irritate the Barons, towards one or other of whom he generally shot it with a successful aim; and, if it did but contribute to Edward's amusement, he spared neither the sanctity of sacerdocy or the gravity of the law. But his insolence of ridicule was chiefly levelled against the great, the magnificent Earl of Lancaster. This Prince, through re-

spect to his Sovereign, (D'Spencer's avowed patron) had long suppressed his resentment, and, indeed, often endeavoured with a forced gaiety to parry the laugh that came full against him, by affecting to join in it; he had been promised the government of the Cinque-Ports, but impatient at the trifling appearance of delay with which his claim was treated, he openly demanded it in full Court at Windsor. Conceive his astonishment on being scornfully refused by the King, who, without even a show of delicacy, at the instant bestowed it on young D'Spencer.—The fiery Lancaster now spurned at his fortitude of tolerance, and quitted the hall, vowing that a swift, yet honourable vengeance should light on the minion's head.

In this unpleasant posture were affairs when Montford and myself returned from France. We were now at

that age when the love of study gradually decays, and we throw by our books to judge of the world ourselves, and become members of it. Our first observations to this purpose were attracted by Blanche and Emma, improved, in our eyes, to perfection; our enraptured fancy was confirmed to reality by general admiration; we beheld the lovely maids, the rising ornament of the English Court. Yet in person, temper, and manner, they displayed a striking contrast. Blanche was reflective, placid, and determined; discretion was the rule whereby she regulated her conduct; trifles ruffled not the sweet serenity of her demeanour; and on discriminating right from wrong, nought could have power to change her purpose. My sprightly sister's mind was of a far more fragile texture; care dwelt not on it; meditation was an unwelcome guest; every look, every gesture, spoke animated exultation, and not a

moment's gloom obscured her smiling hours. Blanche anticipated probable consequences, and framed her actions accordingly; but Emma first performed, and then retrospected. Life, with young Montford, glided on in calm complacency; proof against the cruel pressure of the hand of woe, but insensible also to the glowing raptures of laughing ecstacy. Emma was ever open to the generous transports of virtuous joy; but ah! how vulnerable to the bluntest shafts of sorrow! The interesting Blanche was rather below the common height; long flaxen hair fell in luxuriant waves to her waist, and shaded a faultless person, and features celestially fair; whilst that her blue, her lucid eye beamed with modesty and grace. The cheerful Emma was much taller than Blanche, though both were yet far from having reached their proper stature; her form was most admirably delicate, the auburn tresses gave

lustre to her lily complexion; indeed, so elegant was her person, that she looked a master-piece of the Divine Statuary; a continued bloom tinged her cheeks, at times heightened by exercise, or the blush of genuine sensibility: thus excellence can charm under extreme opposition of appearance.

Emma and Henry Montford, when children, had exchanged hearts; but now those hearts were apparently fixed in each other's possession; and you may suppose that the perfections of Blanche were not viewed by me with a cool philosophic eye. We disclosed our passion to each other, and then repaired, with a mixture of hope, fear, and doubt, to the King, beseeching his permission to smile on our union. Though Edward's affection for me was much abated by absence, or solely engrossed by the D'Spencers, yet he ap-

peared pleased at the thought of the proposed alliance, and readily consented. Henry next proceeded to ask the approbation of his several relatives; I had only to gain that of Gloucester, whose first wish was my happiness. No splendour of preparations was wanting for our nuptials; they were to be graced by the presence of Edward, who commanded them to be solemnized at the Blackfriars.

Young and sanguine, we looked with joy to the future, and saw nothing but unlikely death to prevent our seizing the sparkling cup of felicity.

In the interim we had removed from London, with our intended brides and the aged Gloucester, to a hunting-seat of his, called Clenville Castle, near Sarum, in Wiltshire, a Gothic building, situated in an extensive park. The mansion and demesne were a grant

made to the Earl from Edward I. and when young, Gloucester had exerted the greatest taste and elegance to render it pleasant and convenient.

Oft messengers arrived to inform us of the violent feuds that had lately broke out between the King and his Barons. They were sent away unheeded; for our souls were sunk in love and ease: our time was spent in rural sports and pleasures, or oft reading to, or conversing with Gloucester, whose span was fast contracting; he had lately been attacked by spasms and fits, brought on through old age and excessive anxiety. Indeed, these paroxysms, which we felt sincerely, made the only allay to our happiness.

To one favourite spot we often adjourned. It was a bower, consecrated by Emma to the rosy Hygeia: it was formed by interwoven evergreens.

Here branched the soldier's laurel, there the poet's bay; the broad leaved myrtle now attracted your sight, and then the prickly holly; through peeped the rose, the lily, and the hyacinth; the trunks of the stately poplars and towering holms, instead of ungrateful ivy, were entwined by jasmine and the fragrant honeysuckle. The variegated carpet was the wild and spontaneous productions of the earth; free from the trammels of culture, she here sported all the fancies of her frolic mood; there sprouted the cowslip and daisy, that humbly present themselves to the plodding foot of the heedless peasant; the branches of an eglantine served to prop the sprightly heart's-ease, who, expanding her velvet bosom, seemed to pride herself in her charms of rich colouring and balmy scent; yet, all lovely as she is, how oft are her beauties passed unminded by the discriminating observer, who, with labour and assiduity,

will *seek* the modest violet; the odoriferous flowers, displaying the most glowing tints, were mingled with the uniform green of useful herbs and healing simples: those please the senses; but these often restore decaying health to its pristine state, and stop the fluttering spirit on the very brink of death; thereby giving the contrite sinner full time of preparation to meet his God. A limpid rill divided the lawn, and rushing beneath the thick foliage of a coppice, emerged again to water the lowly though aromatic shrubs clustering near the terrace; whilst the willow bended down to kiss the stream, the stately swan glided majestically on its yielding surface. The sweet warblers here enjoyed their little homes unmolested; no cruel or thoughtless child had ever seized their speckled eggs or unfledged young. Fearless of danger, never experienced, the pretty minstrels perched on our hands; and having poured forth strains

that thrilled every soul with rapture, they took wing, leaving us a lesson of gratitude to the Giver of all.

Whilst we sat in this enchanting bower, we contemplated with ecstacy our future joys. In a few days Montford was to be united to Emma, and Fitzarthur to Blanche. During our converse an interchange of little presents struck our fancy: I presented my bride with a small diamond cross and chain; she, with undescribable grace, placed a pearl loop and button beneath the feather in my hat. Emma gave Montford a purple and silver sword-knot, interwoven with braids of her own hair; and received from him a gold clasp, adorned with jewels, for her robe. When he presented it he assumed a serious look, and said, 'Emma, I cannot justify or even account for my feelings; but my heart misgives me, something whispers me,

thou never wilt be mine: accept this, and O, may it recall thy wandering thoughts, shouldst thou be tempted to forget Montford!' 'Nay,' returned my sister, 'why doubt the permanency of my affection? Do you judge it by the idea of female caprice, or, rather, do you fear your own constancy is not proof to a face more charming than mine?' Then, with ineffable sweetness, she carrolled forth a pleasing sonnet, which was harshly interrupted by a cry of murder! that issued from the grove behind us. We started up, and stood as if petrified: the sound was repeated, with added distress. At the instant a man darted from the thickest part of the wood, ran swiftly across the lawn, leaped the rivulet, and glided through the trees towards the park gates. We remained in doubt whether it were better to pursue the murderer, as we considered him, or fly to the spot, and, if not too late, administer relief: the

had the bias; begging our ter-
sisters to return towards the
we hastened to the grove.

re we beheld the Earl of Lan-
fallen at the foot of a tree, wel-
tering in blood. Montford raised his parent from the ground. The Earl revived, and opening his languid eyes, embraced him; but could not speak. To form an idea of his danger, we looked for his wounds: there were three near the heart, and one, which we concluded to have been the first, on his shoulder. I was returning to the Castle for assistance; but the dying Lancaster held me. 'It is too late, I cannot live,' said he, in a voice scarcely articulate; 'give your sister to my Henry; and you, Fitzarthur, as a husband, be the protector of my orphaned Blanche; I had her picture, but the murderer has snatched it from me.

Did I raise you from the depths of indigence and obscurity for this? O that that vizor, in our struggle, had not fell from his face! I should then have left the world ignorant from whose hand I had received the blow; my heart would not now be pierced by a weapon far more pungent than his steel, the sharp reflection, that ungrateful man could treacherously take the life of his benefactor. I faint! O, D'Spencer!' 'D'Spencer!' exclaimed Montford, rising hastily. 'Attend,' interrupted the Earl, 'check all revenge; let the assassin drag on a guilty life. To-morrow was fixed for his impeachment; conscious that his cause was weak, he feared the power of my influence. My son, I would not urge thee to revenge, it is unchristian; yet I cannot lay such a violence on thy noble nature as to command a total forgiveness of the indignity offered to thy mother.' An

icy paleness overspread his countenance—his eyes closed—he sunk in our extended arms, and with a sigh——

Here was a moment! my friend, bereft of such a father, his grief was too full for tears; he clasped the bleeding corpse, and remained in speechless agony. Judge how our scene of woe was heightened by the sudden presence of Blanche and Emma! My sister, with a piercing shriek dropt in my arms, and Blanche fell senseless on the body of her father.

It appeared that the Earl of Lancaster had quitted London that morning, with intent to visit Gloucester, and to participate in the preparatory joy that reigned at Clenville, for the approaching nuptials of his children. This occasion furnished young D'Spencer with the means of putting his long meditated design in practice; he was well

acquainted with the avenues to the Castle, and knew also, that the guests, preferring a walk through the garden, generally sent their horses round the road to the great gates. He had followed Lancaster from London to Clenville, and on the Earl's dismounting, and entering the grounds, he repaired to the fatal grove by another path; there secreting himself, he suffered his prey to pass him a few yards; then, like a tiger, stealing from concealment, he raised his coward arm, and ere the unsuspecting victim had time to prepare for his defence, the assassin, with repeated blows, compleated his purpose, and fled in the manner seen by us. With difficulty, Blanche was separated from the corpse of her father. The frantic Montford knew not what he said or did—his very soul seemed to turn towards revenge on D'Spencer, whom he swore with his own hand to immo-

late to the manes of his murdered parent. When persuaded by me that rash intemperance was not the method to follow, he then insisted on himself personally adding the direct charge of this worst of murders to the list of D'Spencer's atrocities in the criminal process now pending against him.

I foresaw the evil consequences of such a step: the power of the favourite's phalanx of enemies, the Barons of the realm, had indisputably still much force; but then the King could, at pleasure, elude all their endeavours to destroy D'Spencer, by sending him, under some frivolous pretence, out of the kingdom; or, even should he undergo a trial, and the issue of it was to turn against his life, Edward's word snatched him irrecoverably from the reach of justice. I was assured, that unless carried on by Montford, the nobles would, now their leader, the potent

Lancaster was dead, instantly relax in their threatened prosecution; and, without, perhaps, any injury to D'Spencer, the attempt would, to a certainty, draw on Henry the displeasure and even aversion of his Sovereign. With some address, for he was impatient of reproof, I disclosed these objections, and, by degrees, he listened to me with temper.

'Be firm in your purpose, Montford,' said I; 'I agree with you, that the avenging flame should only be extinguished by the blood of D'Spencer. But is the insidious villain worthy of a fair and honourable punishment? Let us turn against him his own weapon, dissimulation; our plans must be deep laid and energetic; let us, Montford, entangle the lurking miscreant in a snare from which neither guile nor force can extricate him. Your designs of open

attack, either by sword or impeachment, must fail; consider who is D'Spencer's avowed protector, think on Edward's firm attachment to his favourite; none but ourselves as yet know what hand bereft Lancaster of life. Give out that plunder was the only aim in the assassination; to strengthen this report, offer a reward for the apprehension of the *supposed* robber. What, if in the proclamation you mention Blanche's picture that D'Spencer tore from your father's breast. Set forth an ample description of the brilliants, and other ornaments, that rendered this portrait a booty worth the commission of homicide to a needy ruffian; but, if possible, above all, let the real circumstances of the Earl's death remain a secret to Blanche, and the Countess, your mother; were they acquainted with the melancholy truth, their tender hearts, either throbbing for your safety, or swelling with detestation at the sight of the murderer,

might discover our plan ere ripe for execution.'

To my satisfaction, and far beyond my most sanguine hope, Montford adopted this advice, and promised, by his conduct, to conform to my opinion.

CHAP III.

THE THREE RUBIES.

EVERY solemnity of preparation was made for the funeral; the body embalmed, they were proceeding to wrap it in the cloathing of the dead, when Henry, regardless of custom, desired it to be accoutred in satin of the whitest hue, with silver stripes resembling armour; the feet were richly buskined, and three large rubies were fastened by his own hand on the bosom, immediately over the wounds that caused his death. When questioned by me on this strange fancy, Montford replied,—'Fitzarthur, I have other means than my sword to inflict pangs; you will soon behold a further display of D'Spencer's character; watch

the progress of my revenge, but do not be hasty in expressing either your censure or approbation.'

The late Earl, by his courteous and affable condescension of manners to all ranks, had conciliated general esteem; the countenance, more than a sable garment, expressed the sincerity of their grief. The commemoration of his Highness's natal-day, which came about this time, was postponed, and the splendour of court festivity converted into universal sorrow. The body had laid in state three days at the Earl's palace of the Savoy; the evening of the third was fixed for the interment. The domestics, vassals, and household officers, flocked from his several castles and domains to London. They wept a father in their deceased Lord, changed the costly dress for one of black, and joined with lighted torches the mournful procession. The ceremony, though grand,

was not the pride of death for public honours, but the dignity of sorrow for private worth.

The funeral was met at Strand-Bridge by the King, on horseback; attended by the Archbishops, with their crosiers; several holy prelates, clad in sacerdotal habits, praying aloud for the departed soul, the abbot and monks of St. Peter's, and, according to precedency, the nobles, followed each by a vassal bearing the armorial of their respective emblazonry. No interchange of words! looks were sufficiently expressive of the heart's anguish. The solemn train stopt at Westminster. We alighted; and though the concourse was great, a mute decorum and decent respect were strictly preserved; the night itself seemed to mourn; but the inside of the Abbey, from innumerable lamps, broke into a day of illumination. On our entrance

the choristers chaunted a dirge that filled every soul with religious awe, and struck me with undescribable horror. I felt for the widowed Countess, my friend Montford, and the orphan Blanche.

The corpse rested in the middle of the choir, and was laid on a black velvet couch, fringed deep with glittering lace; high sable plumes nodded around; a consecrated banner, with the broad red cross stained upon it, waved over the remains of him who had valorously signalized himself in the Crusade under the first Edward, as the champion of Christ; and at the feet burned four wax tapers, decorated with branches of the box tree. A general silence prevailed, our attention was fixed on the ecclesiastics who stood round the body. The service over, the Archbishop of York advanced from the rest, and with irresolution and evident per-

turbation, withdrew the pall, and exposed the corpse to view. All seemed struck with astonishment at the singularity of the dress: that subsided, an involuntary groan, like one sound, issued from the whole assembly. The prelate with fervent sanctity kissed the pale forehead, and gave a discourse that moistened every cheek. The sermon finished, the men were ordered to open the vault. Montford started, and clasped his hands, exclaiming,—'I have been misinformed, he is not here; my purpose will turn to nought.' His eye from the corpse wandered to the sable group around him; he recognized Edward, and bowed; his look was then riveted on a figure seated near the King; a deadly hue overspread Henry's features, which gave place to a sudden flush of crimson.—'No, he is there,' cried he, 'my revenge will be complete!' His lips quivered, and his eyes flashed fire. I directed my sight towards the object.

Need I say, that in all the haughty impudence of hypocrisy, sat the infamous D'Spencer, overlooking the final accomplishment of his guilty work! He advanced, and with a countenance of sympathizing condolence, gently took and pressed my hand. My blood thrilled! it was the touch of an adder! 'You have experienced a severe loss, Fitzarthur,' said the practised courtier, 'as I think the lamented Lancaster was to have been your father in-law—unhappy Montford! sweet Blanche! I cannot summon fortitude to speak to them.' Great God, from the struggle between prudence and indignation that racked my breast, how did I pity my beloved Henry! in truth, I expected nothing less than that the pious son would rush forward, and, even in the temple of his Creator, at the feet of his King, tear to pieces the murderer of his father. To temper his, I suppressed my own emotion, and had the good fortune,

but little observed, to draw Montford aside. 'D'Spencer's consummate audacity,' said I, 'in daring to profane these sacred rites by his accursed presence, proves that he is devoid of all suspicion; little does he imagine that we are in full possession of his crimes, therefore, off his guard, your sure vengeance may take him at its own advantage.' These words of hope reconciled my injured friend to an appearance of composure.

The vault was now opened; the bier moved slowly towards it: at this heart-rending moment the widowed Countess clung to Blanche, and shrieked—'See, see! they are inhearsing him! O my child, he will soon be hid for ever from our sight!' Blanche, in apparent delirium, escaped from her mother's hold, sprung forward, and, wrapping her flowing veil around her face, sunk on the lifeless body.

The Earl's coat of arms, his helm, spurs, sword, and the trophies won by him from the fierce Saracen, were arranged in military order around the funeral couch; the requiem was chaunted, the Abbot sprinkled the corpse with hallowed water, and placed an enamelled crucifix in the hand. Edward honoured the last ceremony by himself holding a torch at the entrance of the sepulchre; D'Spencer, to our utter astonishment, seized another, and stood opposite, when Montford, furiously grasping his dagger, exclaimed, 'his hour is come, now will I sacrifice——' 'Hold,' cried I, 'would you offend the spirit of your honoured sire? He must, he shall be entombed in peace.' Fortunately the seraphic voices of the young choristers so entirely possessed the pious multitude that this untoward transaction passed unobserved.

For the honour of humanity I wished to see, at this severe trial of dissimulation, some gracious traits of compunction in D'Spencer. The body passing him, by a sudden motion of the bier, the dead hand fell, and, as I conclude, must have touched the assassin; for, though the accident might have happened to any other person standing in the place he occupied, yet he recoiled with signs of extreme horror; his eye then glanced at the three rubies covering the wounds given by his ruthless arm; in my fancy the sight of them stamped Cain's indelible mark on his front; he let fall the taper, and thrust his hand into his bosom, as to conceal something, which I imagined to be the purloined picture of my Blanche; then gnashing his teeth, he staggered backwards, and with a groan, as if his heart was rending, fell against the wall!—Montford perceived the agony he underwent, and, with a placid solemnity,

ordered the bier to stop, and, stooping, detached the rubies from the body. 'My liege,' said he, kneeling, and gracefully presenting one to the King, 'you loved my father, honour this jewel with your acceptance; it may remind your Highness of a much esteemed subject.' Edward in silence graciously took and kissed it. Montford, with tenderness and respect, bestowed the second on his mother; and then, with a speaking look at me, turned to D'Spencer, 'I know of none,' continued he, in a faltering voice, 'to whom this sacred relic more properly belongs than you; my murdered parent esteemed and loved you; in infancy you'—shaking his head, and looking on his face with an eye that pierced — 'you, D'Spencer, rivalled me in my father's love; will the possession of this gem impart a degree of pleasure, or serve but to cloud your moments with sorrow, by recalling to memory that your

friend, who first introduced you to the favour of your royal patron, was untimely bereft of life; when you were young and helpless he, look, that lies there a breathless corse, with anxiety the most solicitous, watched over your health, guarded your guiltless slumbers whilst stretched across his knee, and showered on you the gifts of a polished education: yet he is murdered! D'Spencer, my brother by adoption, do you not grieve? no; your eye is moistless.' Then bursting into a paroxysm of rage and grief, he grasped D'Spencer's arm, and still pointing to the body, continued, 'my father, see, he's dead—he's gone—fell in the prime of manhood, stabbed to the heart by the thirsty poniard of an assassin!'—Dashing away the arm he held, his face bathed in tears, Montford flung himself on the bier, pressing his breast to that of the slain: but awhile recovering himself, he rose, and in a voice of

comparative calmness, resumed—'perchance, my friend, you covet the possession of this blood coloured ruby, the lively emblem of his concealed wounds? take it, you have gratitude, and I am convinced will value it. By that solemn token I claim your aid towards inflicting justice on the abhorred caitiff, should either time or accident discover and deliver him to our power. O, D'Spencer, when you look on that, join the hapless widow, join the orphan Blanche and thy friend Montford in their ceaseless prayers, that the avenging bolt of Heaven may speedily strike the accursed fiend who hath robbed them of a husband, a father, and a benefactor!' The agonized D'Spencer seized the fatal gift with a convulsive grasp, and muttering some inarticulate sounds, overwhelmed with guilt and horror, hastily withdrew, and was lost among the croud. I alone could read the soul of Montford at this momentous

crisis; he smiled with exultation, sighed with anguish, and turning to the men, in a tone of complacent serenity, ordered the body to be laid in the monument; the muffled instruments groaned a dirge—the slow knell struck upon the heart—the choir chaunted Libera Mei—and the sepulchral gates closed on their prisoner.

This mournful duty discharged, the Countess and Montford proceeded for Kenilworth, to adjust many important affairs left in a state of uncertainty by the Earl's sudden death. Blanche having, from childhood, passed but little of her time with her mother, felt, in the society of her friend Emma, an attraction superior to natural affection; this her fond parent perceived, and preferring the happiness of her child to self gratification, without putting her to the pain of asking it, indulgently granted her permission for Blanche to

accompany us to Clenville. Here were we scarce a week, when Montford arrived; yes, here we all again met—but, alas! how changed the face of nature! nor grove, nor bower longer charmed! Henry and I often retired for hours to the once delightful recess, not as heretofore, to talk of our approaching union, but to consider means of revenge on D'Spencer: even the company of our sisters could not divest our minds of this passion; they perceived the melancholy transition, but placed it to the calamity of our common cause.

One morning, whilst walking on the lawn before the Castle, a riotous croud at some distance attracted our attention; we repaired to the spot: a tumultuous band surrounded a man bound with cords. I advanced, and demanded the meaning of this outrage committed in the gardens, but could obtain no answer from the unruly con-

course but turbulent exclamations of 'he's taken!' their leader stepped forth, 'My Lord,' said he, 'your faithful vassals are rejoicing that the assassin of the late noble Earl of Lancaster is apprehended.' 'Apprehended!' exclaimed Montford. 'That is he,' continued the man, pointing to the person in custody: 'if I do not prove the murder on his trial, and then if he is not sentenced for the said crime, I give up all claim to your Lordship's thanks and the reward you offered to any that should take him.' Montford exchanged with me looks of mutual astonishment. Good heavens! thought I, what species of man is this? a cast of D'Spencers. We turned away, and Henry softly whispered, 'shall I seem to give into this?' I assented; to see how far human fraud could stretch in a pernicious design towards the extent of iniquity.

This false chronicle of bad deeds had a title-page of villanous type, blurred and blotted; the accuser's outward appearance was most ill favoured, indeed repelling to the sight: the accused, on the contrary, had a person which, with all the grace of modest confidence, was majestic and commanding; his deportment grave, unaffected, and manly: the plain rusticity of his dress spoke an humble situation in life, yet the beholder of discernment might discover he possessed a soul naturally haughty and impetuous, but softened down by sensibility of some most unparalleled and particular misfortune. From our penetration in the developement of this latter part of his character, and the effrontery of his accuser, it was rather fortunate for him and us that the Earl of Lancaster's last words confirmed the evidence of our own sight to clear him, and throw the perpetration of the deed full upon D'Spencer. Montford expressed his

acknowledgments to the people for their zeal, and taking charge of the prisoner upon himself, ordered him and his confronter to follow us to the chapel. 'Now,' said Henry, 'in few words declare, did you stab my father in Clenville forest?' His answer was simply, 'No:' but that he gave in a firm, intrepid, yet respectful tone. 'Was this the man,' continued Montford, addressing the other, who assassinated my father?' 'It was!' returned he, with the fierce and malign gesticulation of a dæmon; 'he is a shepherd, and lives near the city of Winchester. The day the murder was committed I met him near Clenville Castle; and suspecting, by his looks, that his skulking about boded no good, I watched, and saw him enter the park and follow the noble Earl: still doubtful of his intent, I kept a close eye on both, but sometimes lost sight, from the obstructions of the trees and the wind.

ings of the paths; fearful of his seeing me, I concealed myself in the bower near the grove, where I had not been above two minutes when I heard a groan, and saw the robber instantly run towards the park gates. I was divided whether to follow him or repair to the Castle for assistance, but that I feared the servants might suspect and confine me. The villain's features were so imprinted on my memory that I thought it better to risk meeting him by chance, than hazard my own liberty by divulging the secret at that time. I was right: for a few days after the noble Earl's funeral, I met the murderer by chance in Salisbury, traced him strait to his house about a mile from the city, and this morning assembled the vassals round Clenville, who assisted me in apprehending him.'

'I return you my thanks,' said Montford, at the end of this plausible tale;

'perhaps you are well acquainted with these grounds and park?' 'Every turn, my Lord,' replied he. 'Pray,' demanded I, 'what number of these bowers or recesses are there?' 'Many, my Lord, but I at the unlucky moment had hid in that called the bower of Hygeia.' 'The ladies, Emma and Blanche,' returned Montford sternly, 'Sir Alfred Fitzarthur, here, and myself, were all in that bower of Hygeia at the very *unlucky moment* you speak of.' The *honest* accuser, at this, appeared rather crest-fallen, but soon recovering his insolent levity of manner, replied,—'Well, my Lord, you know an honest man, in the dreadful situation of mind I was in, might mistake the exact spot, —perhaps I was on the lawn, or in the forest, or on the terrace, my senses were all so bewildered.' 'Very probably,' returned Henry, 'such a *dreadful* transaction must have been a severe trial for the *mind* of *man*.'

He then turned, unlocked a small cabinet or shrine, which stood in the corner of the chapel, and took from it the silver crook of a pastoral staff. 'This,' said Montford, turning to me with an affected solemnity of importance, 'was the crosier of the blessed martyr, Thomas a Becket; it remained for many years in Canterbury Cathedral, over his consecrated remains; but Edward I. out of his extreme love, presented it to his brother, Edmund, my grandsire, who was created in his father, Henry III.'s reign, Earl of Lancaster, and invested titular King of Sicily and Apulia; it adorned the chapel at Kenilworth ten years, and then was transported hither, being a gift from my murdered parent to your friend, the Earl of Gloucester. You undoubtedly know that Tuesday was a remarkable day with that holy saint; for on a Tuesday he was born, baptized, banished, recalled, martyred, and

canonized. Now the belief is, that if the trial be made on that day, it has the power to cause convulsions and a distortion of features, as an immediate power of the Divine vengeance on those who commit sacrilege by taking a false oath on it; this legend has established its credibility by repeated proofs. It is rather singular, but this happens to be Tuesday, and although this seemingly superstitious tale has my implicit faith, yet I will seize this occasion to put its virtue to the trial. Here,' turning to the accuser, 'swear on the sacred relic to the truth of what you have alledged against the reputation and life of that man. The wretch advanced, and, laying his hand on the crosier, was about, for a few pieces of gold, to dare the justice of his God, by committing a blasphemous perjury, with intent to bring an innocent man to a death of shame. 'Hold,' cried Montford, seizing his arm, 'thou impious

slanderer, thou shalt not insult thy Maker, and sell thy soul by such a presumptuous profanity: even were I not possessed of most indubitable proofs that thy charge was false, I should acquit him, for on that countenance sits the angel of truth, his advocate, who pleads with such irresistible eloquence, that, had an evil spirit assumed a cherub form instead of thine, all abhorred, I would thus have spurned the calumniator, and thus have taken the guiltless, the honest man by the hand!' The detected traducer shrunk back, confused and trembling, but the injured prisoner, who had till now preserved a look of calm indifference, brightened in every feature, with a lively warmth of most expressive gratitude to Montford. I asked his name? 'Stratton,' replied he;—'and yours?' demanded Henry. 'Maltravers,' growled the miscreant. I started at the sound! the correspondence of name, and the descrip-

tion I had had of his person, together with the age, discovered to me in a moment Gloucester's assassin, and Isabel's treacherous agent. 'Away,' cried Montford, 'and thank my lenity, that I do not deliver thee over to the fury of the deluded people without; they would not leave a limb of thee to hang on a gibbet!' 'Ha!' exclaimed Maltravers, his wall eye sparkling with rage, 'proud Lord, this language becomes neither you to give or me to hear. Although now in the service of the Earl of Carlisle, I am not the slave you suppose me, but your equal, nay, in birth superior; know in me———' 'Go, go!' cried Stratton, the colour mounting to his cheeks as he spoke. Maltravers obeyed; but as he withdrew from the chapel, even dared to mutter curses. I ordered provisions to be distributed among the officious well-meaning peasants, and dismissed them with the belief that they had been mistaken in

their opinion of the prisoner's criminality. Montford, with myself, conceived a perfect esteem for the injured Stratton; we asked him if he knew what, besides the reward, could have prompted Maltravers to such a step? This he candidly owned he could not answer now. When questioned on the means he designed to pursue towards justice on his defamer, he coolly replied, 'Maltravers certainly has been wrong, but it is his nature, and he cannot remedy it. Those who would avoid evil should keep out of his way.' 'You know more of this man than we at first imagined,' said I; 'prithee, declare, if not a material violence to some fixed determination, who is he?' 'Ay,' added Montford, 'what meant he by that boast of superiority over us?' 'Truth,' returned Stratton, with an air of affectionate equality, instead of the cold reserve of distance that hitherto marked his deportment, 'truth, for the first

time, was on the point of bursting from his lips: thus far will I own, though shamed by the base individual, his birth and connections are of themselves illustrious; but to discover more would involve in embarrassment, besides himself, one ambitious of little more than your friendship.' He smiled with a modest complacency. 'Therefore,' continued he, 'excuse me, if I leave to time the clearing up of this seeming mystery: then the shepherd Stratton will prove that the Earl of Lancaster and Sir Alfred have not bestowed their esteem where it is totally unmerited.' Montford and myself both tendered our hands: with a familiar cordiality he took and pressed them in his, looked in our faces, blushed a crimson, bowed respectfully, and retired, leaving us astonished and filled with admiration and esteem for a character which we wished to be acquainted with.

Montford dwelt forcibly on Maltravers's impudent vaunt, and I was both surprised and perplexed at Stratton's confirmation of its propriety.

CHAP. IV.

BLACKLOW HILL.

A NEW-BORN summer seemed to chide our obstinacy of grief, and invite us, as heretofore, to watch her progress, and enjoy the beauty of her transient life. The time for mourning was expired: we re-assumed our gay attire; Blanche and Emma, for the sable serge and flowing crape, substituted the rich satin and costly Flanders: we again glided on the bosom of the lake in gilded barges; again assembled in the bower of Hygeia, where we plucked the eglantine and daffodil, and bound them in garlands to decorate our sisters; again did the gentle Blanche relate her artless tales, and the sprightly

Emma rival the thrush or mavis; the inspired Henry again versified his love and homage. To complete the round of our golden circle of bliss, a day was again fixed for our union.

Ere this took place, one morn, a party of the discontented Barons waited on Montford, now Earl of Lancaster, requiring not only the joint sanction of his presence, as a peer of the realm, at a deed of executive legislation, but also wishing us both to participate in the pleasure they were about to enjoy in the death of England's foe, whom they had at length got into their power. Vindictive fury kept our breasts in a continual ferment while we supposed D'Spencer beyond the reach of vengeance; but now that fate had thrown him within our grasp, Mercy assumed her divine pre-eminence, and forbad me to insult a dying enemy: at a moment the gentle hand of Charity nearly

obliterated, not only my own desire of revenge, but her angel voice also absolved me from the solemn vow I had made to Montford on the murderer of his father; yet he entreated me to accompany him; and, notwithstanding all my resolutions, I consented to become a party in D'Spencer's death. We proceeded, by direction, to a spot about four miles distant, where the nobles formed a court of justice, to try, condemn, and punish the unhappy delinquent. At the head of this implacable tribunal sat the Earl of Warwick, son to my father's former persecutor. This young man was of a singular turn, most implacable in disposition, yet so passionately fond of music, that his admiration for that science nearly approached a degree of mania.

On our arrival he rose, and politely welcoming us, he pointed to seats. Near me I beheld, with dismay, an

axe laid on the plane of a tree, seemingly hewed down for the purpose: silence was enjoined among the people, and Warwick commanded the prisoner to be brought forward.

Imagine my amazement when, instead of the gallant haughty D'Spencer, I beheld an utter stranger, who seemed to be in the wane of life: his tattered garments denoted woe, poverty, and every extreme of complicated wretchedness. When certain that the malefactor was not D'Spencer, my heart melted into compassion at the sight of a fellow-creature, though even guilty, plunged into such an abyss of humiliation. My emotions were observed: the prisoner started, and seemed surprised, and even overjoyed, at an unexpected appearance of pity and commiseration in one seated among his judges. The peers were also amazed; but the great business of their

meeting soon recalled all attention from me; and they quickly proceeded to read the list of crimes. The principal were, his having seduced the King from the paths of virtue and honour to those of vice and effeminacy—biassed the affairs of the state to his own interest—embezzled and obtained immense sums of the public money by blank charters—treated the Barons of the realm with contempt and indignity--protected robbers, to the danger and annoyance of his Highness's subjects;—of having taken unwarrantable liberties with the seal of England—amerced the people at pleasure—lavished honours and bestowed the highest employments under government on his own creatures—and, lastly, of having arrogated to himself the royal dignity and prerogative. The seeming inconsistency, and, indeed, absurdity of these charges, when I looked on the miserable object against whom they were directed, threw me

into the utmost astonishment. The stranger looked at his relentless judges, and with a sigh that pierced my heart, cried, 'O, Warwick! to draw me by the illusive light of hope from a gloomy solitude, the peaceful retreat I had chosen for my grave of life and death—now to arm, and even to head this host of determined foes!—I trusted your word; you have basely betrayed me; you professed friendship, now boast your enmity: you deceived me by forged papers and wily assurances, ensnared me to England, and thus you ungenerously deliver me into the hands of these remorseless Barons!'

The ruthless Warwick, deaf to this pathetic remonstrance, fiercely called for pen and parchment. 'Hold!' cried the unhappy prisoner, 'since my death is inevitable, at least grant a last request; suffer me to see once more the Royal Edward.' 'By St. Mark,' re-

turned the inhuman Warwick, 'I joy I know thy wish, that I may have the delight of blasting it by a refusal.' Saying this, he snatched a pen, and hastily scrawled his doom. The noblemen followed his example, by each signing his name. The parchment was brought to Lancaster; he turned away, saying, 'I understood your victim was Hugh D'Spencer; I know not that man.'

Wishing to secure indemnity for their hasty proceedings towards the death of the culprit, the nobles required the suffrages of all the Knights present. The fatal instrument was in due rotation presented for my signature. I felt strongly affected: the stranger perceived it; and a ray of hope and joy illumined his countenance. 'Will not seventeen years atone for the King's, I confess, undeserved partiality?' said he. 'Hear me, my Lords, I appeal to yourselves, who

amongst you would refuse the proffered favour of his Sovereign? then, if intoxicated with the giddy height of exaltation, you should yield to human frailty, and fall into irregularities enormous as the exaggerated record now brought against me, you would then be each a criminal. Steel your hearts against me now, and remorse will yet make you feel your error in a too late contrition. No!' continued he, after a pause, 'neither justice nor mercy preside here. Then, let loose your vengeance; strike off this aged head: but when your cruel purpose is completed, may repentance keep you in a state of exquisite torture day and night; still shall ye exclaim, 'That I had never embrued my hands in the blood of Gaveston!'

All righteous God! was it?—yes, it was my father. 'Gaveston! look on me! I am—your son!' I threw my-

at his feet. He wept, he raised, embraced me. I drew my sword, stepped before him. Lancaster heathed his also, and stood by my ', with an action forcibly expres- : of determined opposition to the ons. 'Attempt the least violence,' laimed I, 'and this arm, nerved filial ardour, shall punish your te- rity: it is death to the first that ap- aches.' My threats, the defiance ny potent auxiliary, and their own prise at such an unexpected inci- t, threw them into a confusion of plexity. Alas! the pause was short. ırwick recovering himself, with a lected composure of fortitude, haugh- replied, 'Fitzarthur, I am not dupe of this unworthy artifice. at hoary traitor hath interested you his hypocritical appeal to the pas- ıs; and you, forsooth, wish to save ı by imposing him on us as your ıer. A pleasant fable this, my

Lords!' turning to them with a sneer; 'you are desired to believe that the young Scots Knight, Sir Alfred, introduced by his guardian, the Earl of Gloucester, at Edward's Court, is the son of the execrable, the favourite Gaveston!' 'He is,' exclaimed Montford; 'Gaveston is the father of young Emma and my honoured friend here. At my intercession, Warwick, suspend his fate.' 'It cannot be,' returned the inexorable Earl—'Lancaster defend a traitor! Would you sacrifice the public good to your private interest? What matters it to us friendship and plighted vows? England demands the blood of Gaveston: as a cordial to the wounds he hath inflicted, we her children have resolved to satisfy her; and the abhorred alien's instant death is decreed.' 'O, my father!' cried I. 'Peace!' rejoined Warwick, 'if you are a branch of that cursed stem, perish with him!' My

father threw himself on his knees, and, with a voice of agony, disowned me. I saw through his affectionate design; and at the moment of the impetuous Warwick's darting forward, I aimed a blow, which those around him, timely perceiving my intention, warded off, and rushed, like a storm, on my father, Lancaster, and myself. Each of the nobles took their share of the divided prey: and, is it to be credited? without listening to a word in his vindication, without even pronouncing the sentence, they dragged my parent to ——Nature shudders at the thought!

I saw no more; my senses fled; and all my woes were suddenly immersed in the gulph of oblivion. When I recovered, for I had been long entranced, it was night; the moon had already reached her summit; all nature, as if in commiseration for my loss, or thro' disgust at the infamous deed, was

hushed in silence. At the first opening of my eyes upon a world of misery, a dear object met them: Montford was bending over me. In his features was pourtrayed solicitude and the most poignant anguish. I endeavoured to recollect what had passed; but my mind was bewildered in a kind of stupor. I rose: my feeble limbs could scarce support me; I leaned on Lancaster, and walked a few paces; then stopped, looked around, and beheld—the block, covered with blood; the earth round was dyed in crimson. Montford, fearful of a relapse, begged me to leave the fatal spot. 'And are you gone, my honoured, my beloved parent? Did your Alfred meet you after so long an absence only to be witness to your death? Warwick! detested Warwick! sore shall you rue this day!' 'Fitzarthur,' interrupted Montford, 'my heart mourns for you; but am not I an equal sufferer? I un-

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Isabel, the Queen, had heard, to her surprise and mortification, that Gaveston was still alive: fearing, if the knowledge of this circumstance should come to her infatuated husband, that he would recall his favourite from exile, she resolved, by a notable stroke of court intrigue, at once to end her fears, by putting it for ever beyond his power. With this view she contrived to counterfeit letters as from Edward himself; they were couched in the most ardent and delusive terms, intreating Gaveston to return, offering unbounded wealth and additional honours; as likewise engaging, with his own life, to protect him from the power of the Queen and Barons.

Isabel, knowing his subtlety, and convinced that he inherited his father's marked aversion to Gaveston, fixed on Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, to atchieve this enterprize. Having, with

secrecy and solemn promises of diligence and fidelity, received from his royal mistress the necessary instructions and his false credentials, Warwick sailed on his insidious embassy to Portugal.

My father, in whose soul a few remaining sparks of ambition rekindled the almost dying hope of once more seeing his Sovereign, accepted the invitation, and returned to England, accompanied by the crafty Beauchamp. On the instant of his arrival he hastened to Sheene, his heart glowing with the joyful expectation of again beholding the royal Edward, and to compensate for his eclipse in the miserable obscurity of seventeen years banishment, by the triumph and brilliancy of his restoration to the exalted rank he had formerly held in the resplendent circle of the British court. Not allowing for the change time had made upon his person,

or considering the declension of his natural endowments, yet did my poor father hope again to shine England's meridian sun, dispense his influence as heretofore, and, like the Persian God, receive homage from the prostrate adorers.

Without revealing himself, he obtained admittance to the antichamber of the King's private closet, telling the officers in waiting, with their leave, there he'd stay till he could obtain an audience of his Highness. But they had scarce quitted the room when his impatience suggested the remembrance of another door and secret passage that led immediately to the King's closet; he quickly hastened through it. Edward's well known voice struck upon his ear like a friend's first greeting after a tedious night: he sprang towards the room, and laid his trembling hand on the door, which gently opening, he en-

tered, and beheld his Sovereign in a shew of intimate conference with a young man, such as was once himself. Checked by this sight, he stopt.

'And can you, will you ever remember your humble favourite?' These words from the fawning hypocrite, for it was D'Spencer, accompanied by looks of the most unspeakable insinuation, threw the astonished Gaveston into extreme confusion; he waited with breathless agitation for the dreaded answer.

'When I swerve from that friendship,' returned Edward, 'I profess for D'Spencer, and which was an utter stranger to my soul till I knew thy virtues and thy merits, may every evil be showered on this head, the just reward for such perjured baseness!' 'Nay, nay,' cried my father, 'this must needs be a delusion.' The King, alarmed at the voice, turned; but on beholding

the motionless figure, he shrieked, and impulsively wrapt his robe around his head; yet, on daring to take another look, supposing it to be but the spectre of his unhappy friend, he suddenly broke from the grasp of D'Spencer, and darted forwards, when a variety of contending passions seizing on his brain, he exclaimed, with frantic vehemence, 'It is he! murdered Gaveston!' and falling senseless, was supported by D'Spencer.

My father, now somewhat recovered from the violent shock he had received by a reception so very different from what he expected, with a look of affectionate reproach, took Edward's hand; 'Is this my welcome, Sir?' said he. 'O King, friend, companion of my youth, is it thus you have kept your faith? At our parting did you not engage none should ever share with me even your esteem; yet now, when you

yourself drew me from my concealment, I find you disowning the sincerity of your protestations of inviolable attachment to me, and here vowing perfidious friendship to a beardless boy. Who art thou, youth,' continued he, turning fiercely to the dejected yet amazed D'Spencer, 'that darest presume to rob me of my right? But thou art not to blame, it is my weak foresight, that, by a blind partiality, judged of his constancy of character by my own. The conscious certainty that my truth to you, Edward, shone still pure and lambent, alone proved the balm to my wounded mind at our grievous separation, and my long, long exile!'

These words, like those of a fading vision, recalled the King to a real return of waking sense; opening his eyes, they beheld, with unequivocal conviction, the form of Gaveston kneeling by him; he shrunk from a sight he could

not bear; and, on the other side, met a look of reproach from his offended D'Spencer. 'Cruel Prince!' said my father, 'unfeeling Edward! didst thou send for me from Portugal, with delusive promises, only to embitter my future days with the baleful remembrance that Edward broke his faith to Gaveston? I will hence, and seek my grave remote from England and ingratitude; yes, King, ingratitude, for my life's blood was your's!' With slow unequal steps he was retiring from the chamber, when Edward, sensibly pierced by this last avowal, endeavoured to stay him. 'Gaveston!' cried he, 'hear me, thou art deceived; I betray thee! I knew not even that thou existed; return, I am still thy friend; here do I swear to cast off the D'Spencers, and confide in none but thee.' Thus did he remonstrate and lavish effusion of promises, but all without effect; my father, faint from a sickened soul, proceeded, lean-

ing feebly on a staff, towards the outward gate. Here the smiling rays that drew him to this den of death vanished, and the coming storm spoke to him in thunder. At the bridge Warwick, not now with the grace of courtesy hanging upon every feature, but the unmasked face of savage ferocity, met him with a numerous band. Beauchamp was about to seize Gaveston, when Edward, who had hastily followed the forlorn fugitive, appeared at the moment, and throwing himself between them, Warwick retired a few paces, and ordered his forces also to fall back, then advancing alone, 'My liege,' said he to Edward, with a determined voice of firmness and solemnity, 'this is the second infringement of the sacred oath passed to your dying father; that traitor, by violating the conditions of its tenor, lies now within our mercy: I, in the name of England, demand him; if you do not deliver him up, we

will doff aside your power, assert our privileges, and by force tear the three favourites from your impotent protection!' The audacious Baron paused for reply. The Sovereign, appalled and intimidated, stood in silence; but on Warwick's suddenly turning and making a signal to his troops, the pusillanimous Prince, under the immediate influence of dismay and terror, precipitately entered the palace, thereby snatching from their fangs the devoted victim. With more presence of mind than might have been expected, the King instantly ordered the gates to be closed after them, and all the entrances to the palace to be strongly barricadoed and guarded. But Warwick's numbers hourly encreasing; and having heard that the Londoners, fired with enthusiastic rage at the tidings of Gaveston's return, had also revolted; apprehensive of being invested and overpowered, beyond all hope of saving my

wretched parent, Edward thought it adviseable to quit Sheene ere too late, and retreat to Scarborough. In the castle of matchless strength he left Gaveston, and repaired himself, by forced marches, to York, in hopes of being able to make head against the rebellious Warwick, through the known loyalty of the northern peasants. But the favourite's retreat could not be long concealed; the next day, the till now impregnable fortress was assailed by Beauchamp with an innumerable force: the fury and indignation of the factious multitude knew no bounds, they threatened to put all within the walls to the sword should they obstinately hold out till taken by storm. In the inveterate contest, by sally and escalade, many fell on both sides. My father, through despair, or rather impelled by humanity, which urged him to stop the effusion of blood shed in his cause, surrendered. Beauchamp kept him a few

hours confined in Warwick Castle, convened the Barons, and conveyed his prize to Blacklow Hill, the place destined for their inhuman sacrifice.

As before related, the unfortunate Gaveston in one of his judges discovered a son: the son there found and lost a father.

CHAP. V.

AN EJECTMENT.

HOW did my heart burn with indignant rage! Whilst, like a very woman, I curst the virago Isabel and her instruments, manly resentment would no longer suffer me to skulk and lead the contemptible life of a mean and dastardly temporizer: I flung off the name of Fitzarthur, proudly proclaimed my birth, and assumed my father's title. I was now Earl of Cornwall. To render myself worthy of my lamented parent, I professed it as my glory to stand forth the son and determined avenger of the much-wronged martyred Gaveston. I quitted Clenville, and repaired to Edward, whom I found steeped in puerile sorrows. The imbecile monarch

caught from me the flame of duty, and vowed to revenge the death of his friend on every rebel head in England.—Fraught with this purpose, we repaired to Dover, where Edward, assisted by my unremitted efforts, soon levied a powerful army, notwithstanding the advice of his brother Kent, who warned him against rashly opposing the but too justly irritated nobles.

And now a civil war would have been inevitable, had not the Earls of Kent and Richmond, stayed by the laudable fear of drenching their country in blood, delayed hostilities, under various pretences, until the arrival of the Pope's nuncio, in hopes that the hand of meek religion might throw the olive branch between an offended Sovereign and his exasperated subjects. Happily they appeared as the unnatural strife was about to commence; in an authoritative voice, and with all the sublime impor-

tance of sacerdotal pomp, these foreign priests denounced a tremendous anathema on the impious hand that should first dare to rend the sacred veil which Heaven itself had placed before the sanctuary of white robed eace: a miracle followed—their weapons dropped from the soldiers' grasp The workings of malignity and wrath, which so lately convulsed their features, now gave place to a smile of reciprocal amity. If discord really changed her habitation, she came to dwell with me; to see the blooming hopes of my darling revenge dashed aside by the cabalistical ravings of a canting hypocrite! But now that years and affliction have tempered my spirit, now that I am humbled by the frequent and familiar visits of adverse vicissitude, assure yourself I severely censure what I then most zealously applauded; yes, much grieved am I to think that even filial piety could hurry me within the vortex of injustice and

barbarity. Had cool reflection given me a retrospect of the grievance the kingdom laboured under when my father was at the helm of government, or the many unsupportable fines and exactions heaped upon the Londoners by the monarch since his accession, instead of slandering their attempt to procure redress by the foul name of rebellion, probably I should have abetted their most violent efforts to obtain it; but selfish illiberality prevented the generous dilation of my heart; I only saw in Edward a benefactor, and alone conceived that I had lost in Gaveston a father. This sudden destruction to all my dearest wishes was too much With the rash impetuosity of youth I, on the spot, most indecently upbraided my royal master with timidity, superstition, and ingratitude, for thus receding from the laudable and manly conduct promised by his first spirited onset. The apparent justice of my reproof and

force of importunity might have successfully urged the unsteady Edward again to take up arms in order to crush the insurrection, when, as if by the interference of Providence, a messenger at the moment arrived with tidings, that the Queen was delivered of a Prince.

A clamorous shout of joy, more dissonant to my ears than the yelling of fiends, rang with one sound of acclamation through both camps; the banners, not now ensigns of war but flags of triumph, waving, flapped in the air: to the universal shouts of the enthusiastic multitude, the trumpet, instead of the soul inspiring call to arms, sent forth the sweetest notes of gratulation, and the drum now only added spirit to the melodious concert that, for ten thousand expected deaths, celebrated a glorious new-given life to England.

When the first transports of exultation were subsided, Stephen de Abingdon, the Mayor, kneeling to the King, submissively craved pardon for the past, and beseeched his Highness to visit the city of London, as a gracious proof of his foregiveness. Edward, taking advantage of this truly humble testimony of sincere affection in the Londoners, ungenerously returned in answer, that for their late daring rebellion, they should be deprived of all their rights, privileges, and charters, granted to them since his coronation, unless they would pay the penalty of four thousand marks. This demand they heard with mortifying chagrin; however, the Mayor, in the name of the citizens, begged time to deliberate, and with renovated kindness, humbly requested him to honour London with his royal presence. Edward, like a froward infant to the solicitations of an

indulgent parent, morosely consented, and promised to pass through their city on his return to Sheene. The same hour he repaired to Eltham, where he received from his consort the illustrious infant, who was baptized the next day by the prelate of Canterbury, and named John. The crafty and ambitious Isabel, wishing to partake of the honours which she knew would be showered on her husband at such a juncture, prevailed upon him to delay his entrance till she could accompany him. Edward, with the hope of securing the hearts of his subjects by favouring them with an exhibition of his infant son, readily consented; and in the bosom of domestic felicity, the King soon forgot the murdered Gaveston. I dared once expostulate with him on his caprice; he listened to me, it is true, but with a chilling indifference that determined me to be for ever silent on the subject, or, at least, wait until

the first emotions of parental joy were abated; for the changes in Edward's temper were so certain and rapid, that even this held out comfort by the promise of another, and enabled me to carry an appearance of calm resignation to the Divine will. Though with much violence to my inclination, I even attended his Highness and the hated Isabel to London. But, ah! how visionary were all my ideas of revenge! On my arrival at the city, I clearly discerned that the preparations made by the subjects derived their source of joy, not so much from affection to the Sovereign, as reciprocal gratulations on the death of my miserable parent. Yet still I judged it no ill measure to temporize, though you may conceive but aukwardly. Picture the wretched Cornwall, with disconsolate brow, and heart corroding wrath, stalking thro' the solemnity of their processional pomps and pageantries. Neither ex-

pence nor ingenuity were spared, in splendid shews or quaint magnificent contrivances, by the citizens, to testify the pleasure they experienced, in an addition to Edward's private happiness: the conduits ran with wine, the houses-balconies, and churches, were decorated with plate, tapestries, and branches of evergreen, and emblematical devices adorned every street through which we passed.

I endeavoured to accommodate my mind and senses to the passing scene, but in vain; for, would you think it,—cannot the grave shelter wretched man from the unworthy triumph of his frail fellows over silent dust? The very crown and pinnacle of their joy, from the extravagant delight they appeared to take in it, seemed to be one particular pageant, erected by them at Cheapside: the Genius of the isle was represented transfixing with her spear

a prostrate wretch, cloathed in mourning, who brandished a scourge in one hand, and with the other attempted to fling a chain round her person: the lion couched at her feet, as ready to dart and tear in pieces the audacious caitiff, whose countenance displayed the exact features of Gaveston. The multitude hailed this poor display of national justice with rapturous shouts and acclamations. I now threw off the mask of apathy, and rushed from the servile crowd; my bosom, fraught with an host of contending passions, all the dæmons of revenge arose in my mind, armed each with a flaming brand, prepared to hurl at the base, the ruthless Warwick! But here I had only burning wishes; for he, convinced, as I affirmed on the fatal day, that I was the son of Gaveston, dared not boldly meet me arm to arm, but, like a coward, hid his accursed head in the wilds of Scotland.

I was found in this distraction of soul by a messenger from Clenville, bringing me intelligence of the death of my grandsire, Gloucester. The venerable Earl was full of years, and the untimely fate of his unhappy son in-law rudely shook the last sands from his nearly exhausted glass.

And now, after an absence of three months, suppose me at Clenville. The servants that met me at the entrance were all in mourning for their deceased Lord. My sympathizing condolence with these faithful sufferers was mingled with every cheering argument that my wish to comfort them could suggest; I desired them to reflect that a pious man (as such their late master) was by death only transplanted from this sublunary nursery to the garden of paradise. My efforts at consolation producing but mutual incomprehensiblity, I hastened to the saloon,

where sat Blanche de Montford, and her brother Lancaster, in close converse.

They rose, indeed, at my entrance; but, instead of the cordial reception I expected, they started from me. I spoke; neither answered: I requested an explanation of a something which seemed to me hid in mystery; they remained silent, yet kept their eyes steadfastly upon me.

Conscious of the purity of my heart towards them, I blushed with indignant anger at their conduct; and forgetting that one was my friend, the other my bride, I threw myself on a couch, and exclaimed in broken accents, 'Ye are all formed of the same base mould, yet, though you join the general cry of a sordid world, and despise me, Montford—cruel thought! —yes, it is evident now that I am known as the forlorn son of Gaveston,—heir to the sorrows of a persecuted father,

sacrificed to a nation's ire :—you withdraw your friendship and shun me.'

This torrent of rhapsody gave Lancaster time to collect himself from the amazement into which my sudden entrance had thrown both him and Blanche. 'No, no,' said Montford, 'the sole cause of my unpardonable inattention proceeded from our surprise, not to say shock, at seeing you in this gay and magnificent attire during the mourning for your grandsire, the Earl of Gloucester.'

The ingenuous and noble minded Lancaster was not expert at dissimulation, yet his want of skill was made up by my credulity. Having apologized for the ill timed splendour of my appearance, I expressed a wish to see my sister Emma, whom I had not an opportunity of speaking to since the death of our father, but was informed

by Blanche that she had retired to her chamber that night earlier than usual, from a slight indisposition; and if now composed to rest, both she and Montford were of opinion that she should not be disturbed, particularly as the sight of me might not be attended with the best consequences in the present precarious state of her health.

The remainder of our conversation was unsatisfactory and embarrassed. We separated at midnight, and each retired to their several apartments. Having hastily dismissed the attendants, I laid down on a couch without undressing, for I felt no disposition to sleep; repose had fled, and left my breast a prey to despair and anguish. Thus I lay, as I imagine, three hours, when I was disturbed from a profound and painful reverie, which, however, flattered me with a promise of slumber, by the entrance of Emma.

'I have escaped from them!' she cried. The words were few, yet they conveyed volumes of intelligence. I had not power to speak, but gazed at her with a mixture of horror and amazement, for her looks were wild and vacant.

'Alfred!' exclaimed she cheerfully—'Oh my poor father!' her voice sinking to a mournful cadence, 'are you dead? Inhuman brother! could you stand by and not save him?—Merciless! cruel Warwick! his head severed!—See, Gaveston waves his hand for me to follow!—I come, my father!—stay—protect your Emma!'

She rushed from the room, and left me immersed in woe. The gentle and consolatory voice of Lancaster was the first sound that welcomed me back to life, and to a recollection of the heart-rending scenes I had lately witnessed. When he had, in some measure, suc-

ceeded in his humane endeavours to calm my mind and allay the poignancy of my grief, he related what had passed during the privation of my senses.

Montford had conducted my unhappy sister to his mother, then residing at Kenilworth, where, if in the power of the Countess and her daughter Blanche's unremitting care and attention, she would have every possible chance of recovery. I was on the point of expressing my gratitude to my kind and considerate friend for this proof of tenderness and esteem, when we were hastily interrupted by the appearance of Maltravers, who abruptly entered the room, and, without farther ceremony, acquainted me that young D'Spencer had sent himself and a number of his Lordship's vassals to prepare the Castle for his reception.

'Did you know of this, my Lord?' demanded Montford hastily; then, without waiting for an answer, 'How!' continued he to Maltravers, 'prepare this Castle without the owner's invitation, concurrence, or even knowledge!' This spirited apostrophe rouzed me from the astonishment into which the doubt of such an instance of matchless audacity had thrown me. 'Clenville,' exclaimed I, 'devolves to me in right of my mother, daughter and sole heiress of Gilbert, the late Earl of Gloucester.'

'My Lord,' replied Maltravers, with an insolent composure, that irritated Montford to such a degree of phrenzy, but for my interposition he would have felled him at a blow, 'it may have been your's; but, by a royal gift, it is now the property of D'Spencer, who was this morning created Earl of Gloucester; that title, from your

grandfather's dying without male heirs, having become extinct.' 'Admitting what you advance,' returned I, 'to be true, this estate of Clenville was not annexed to the earldom.' 'Well! my Lord, you may dispute his Highness's orders hereafter; but your immediate departure from this mansion is insisted upon.' 'And can the noble Edward,' cried Lancaster, 'be fallen to a state of the most unjust tyranny? Nay, doubly will censure fall on him. Is he not by law your guardian? Is it thus he fulfils his trust?' 'Treasure well your words, my Lord,' said Maltravers, 'a time may come that you will repent these glorious aspersions.'

'Then, most *illustrious* villain!' replied Montford, with a sneer, 'you are authorized to dare and threaten a Baron of the realm! Begone! and tell your master that the sword of justice——'

'Really, my gentle [illegible] interrupted Malravers, in a [illegible] liberale tone if [illegible] the quick, [illegible] services, but [illegible] mind to understand [illegible] rhapsody and [illegible] vulgar comprehension. [illegible] ing to me, desired [illegible] on whatever property [illegible] to claim; and, with a [illegible] mand to leave [illegible] saying, he expected [illegible] hour.

'Disperse in [illegible] ter, when Malravers had hurried the room; "[illegible] base assassin [illegible] the body of [illegible] Cornwal[illegible] father's [illegible] arm; now see the reward of your mercy."'

You may feel disgusted at my tameness, in thus suffering myself to be driven from my paternal roof by a verbal message; but, however indign this despotic measure, the complexion of the times forced me to submit. Besides, something whispered, that to oppose these arbitrary proceedings might be an obstruction to our purpose of revenge on D'Spencer. Revenge! a passion which warmed my breast, and raged with quenchless flames in Lancaster's.

I felt a pang at leaving Clenville: very dear and interesting was the spot to me. There Emma and myself entered this world of misery; and from thence the souls of both Gloucester and our mother took their flight. Was it not cruel and inhuman, think you, to drive me from it? Such was my extreme infatuation of attachment to this beloved abode, that I would

have returned, when Montford, catching my hand, cried, 'Hold! Alfred, that mansion is no longer your's. Would you breathe beneath the roof that has D'Spencer for its owner?' The place seemed a hell; I shrunk away. Lancaster proposed our taking horses; but my soul felt a repugnance at turning to my own use any thing wherein my right admitted of dispute. Having hastily arranged my affairs at Clenville, we walked to Trefusis' Castle, a few miles distant, where we were hospitably received by that generous youth, with whom we first became acquainted at Cambray, and who had, some time back, been created Lord Clinton.

If you will allow the distinction, my mind and spirit were at variance on what course I should take; whether to yield calmly to the hand of power, or repair to the King, and, in the pre

sence of himself and my fellow peers, assert my right to Clenville, and demand redress for the injurious manner of my expulsion. Both the Lords, particularly Lancaster, advised and urged me to the latter. I needed not much persuasion, and therefore appointed a day to proceed to St. Alban's, where Edward then lay, and prove the justice of my claim. Montford proposed visiting his mother, and our sisters Blanche and Emma, at Kenilworth, but to repair previously to his palace of the Savoy, where he had not been since his father's interment.

Having taken leave of our friend Clinton, Lancaster and myself separated, with a promise to meet at Kenilworth, whatever my success.

Disappointment and affliction were ever ready with their greetings to me. On my arrival at St. Alban's, Edward

had left that city the same morning for Oxford; and though only two days had elapsed since my parting with Montford, I learnt that he had been seized in London, by the order of the King, at the instigation of the favourite D'Spencer; but where they had confined him none knew. This unforeseen and heavy stroke of distress blasted all my concerted schemes. Stimulated now only by my regard for, and gratitude to Lancaster, I entered into a solemn engagement with my own heart to save or perish with him.

Arrived at Oxford, a private audience was what I sought, which, by repeated messages of earnest entreaty, I at length obtained. Edward received me with an awkward show of satisfaction, for shame lurked behind the mask of complacent ease. At sight of me, the sudden recollection of his credu-

lity in listening to the tales of the slanderous D'Spencer, his weakness in so soon obliterating from his thoughts the memory of one who so dearly loved him, his puerile inconstancy in withdrawing his attachment from the orphans whom he had once befriended, all these combined causes of embarrassment threw his mind into evident perturbation. Not now on the comely lineaments of Edward shone the benign steadiness of conscious majesty. No, they pourtrayed the poverty of a mean soul, skulking from its own observance. So easy is it our honour to sustain, so are we debased in losing it!

'Why, Sir,' cried I, 'why are my lands confiscated? What act of treason can my King suppose committed against him by the son of Gaveston to authorize such an unjustifiable act of despotism? Why should D'Spencer usurp thy

ward's inheritance? Mine, my liege, rightly devolved to me by the death of my respected grandsire,—thy uncle, Edward, the illustrious and renowned Gloucester. Why is the companion of my youth, the princely Lancaster, thy kinsman also, why is that Henry Montford, who in childhood shared with me thy royal smile under the sanction of of him who should be his protector and his advocate, why is his person snatched from freedom, and his name stained with calumny? Yes,' continued I vehemently, and raising my voice, 'whilst I avow that Montford is no traitor, with regret I pronounce my King the dupe of an artful and designing parasite. Your D'Spencer is an abject spaniel, that fawns with specious adulation on his Sovereign, and yet fattens like a rapacious wolf on thy wronged subjects. But have a care, my liege, faithless to thy trust, that thou willingly sufferest them to be fleeced; they bleat

with universal complaint against the royal shepherd. D'Spencer revel in thy favour, and Montford, perhaps, immured in a dungeon! Oh, my Lord, not poverty, death, or even slander, can extinguish the lustre of a truly great character!'

By Edward's deigning to listen to me with composure, and not shewing the least wish to interrupt me, I secretly concluded he acknowledged the truth of what I had advanced; but D'Spencer had so far vitiated his mind that he was proof against conviction.

'Well, Gaveston,' replied he, after a moment's silence, 'bate me at thy good pleasure, for I see thou art angry; offend me with impunity, for to pardon is the privilege of a prince; so far for thy insult to myself, but presume not overmuch on the estimation in which I held thy fa-

ther; that cannot save thee, hectoring boy! if swelled with the pride of envy or of malice, thou presumest to vilify the radiant character of the gallant D'Spencer, whom, in lieu of aspersing, thou shouldst learn to emulate.'

This ill drawn picture of honour and infamy determined me to point at Edward the shaft to which I knew he was most vulnerable; for though he dreaded sarcastic irony when turned to himself, yet he ever encouraged and admired this *good natured* talent in his favourite, when exacted at the expence of others.

'Crown thy D'Spencer, my liege,' said I, 'let him wield the sceptre, too heavy for thee to bear; thy passive subjects will with reverence and exultation own the minion for their Lord. If thou dost not resign thy diadem voluntarily, he, perhaps, viper-like, will

sting, and in the end, either by force or craft, tear it from thee. My mind misgives me,—I think the ambitious youth will one day himself unveil thy now blinded eyes, and shew himself to thee in his true colours; then, as thy people bow to the great and powerful D'Spencer, seated on England's throne, they will rejoice at the gentle Edward's abdication.'

This stroke touched the very core of Edward's heart, and rouzed him to a flame of anger that, till this moment, I thought incompatible with his nature: the fury of his soul flashed in his eye, and reddened in his countenance.

'Hence, audacious Cornwall!' exclaimed he, 'nor dare again approach our presence.' He stamped on the ground, and vociferated aloud for the waiting courtiers, who had retired on my entrance.—'Take notice, Lords,'

continued the enraged Prince to them, then turning fiercely to me, 'Gaveston, we banish thee; and by him whom I adore, if thou'rt found within ten miles of our Court for the time being, thy life shall answer for thy insolence; thy disobedience, thy rebellion.'

Darting an indignant glance around, he rushed from the apartment. Now out of favour with my Sovereign, need I say that in a moment I was left alone; though soon brought to recollection, by the entrance of an officer, with the King's express command that I should instantly depart. This mandate was unnecessary; and now imagine me at Kenilworth: here I hoped for peace, and not in vain; the friendly and right noble Countess of Lancaster met me with the genuine tokens of sweet and unaffected complacency; here, from th hateful court, I entered like a detached soul from a distracted world to

the serene joys of Paradise. Such is the transition of delight that calms the troubled heart on entering the mansion of those we love.

I accompanied my kind and gracious hostess to the presence of a darling sister, indeed now my all of comfort. So thought I, but this inconstant reflection was soon chid away by the approach of the gentle Blanche: had Montford shared with me this blessful meeting, I should have fancied myself again arrived at the summit of earthly happiness. Blanche was still beautiful, but Emma was again my sister; every grace beamed with encreased elegance on the face of Blanche; but reason had resumed her seat in the mind of my now restored Emma.

At sight of me the starting tear glided down her cheek, my soul felt the sympathetic cause,—we had now

no father. Fearful of grieving the tender hearts of my fair companions, I mentioned not the apprehension and confinement of a person so dear to all; but my precaution was unavailing, as the unwelcome tidings of Lancaster's disgrace had reached them the day before.

These lovely women at once retarded and pressed my departure to seek Montford; now reproached me for leaving them so soon, then blamed me for not hastening with comfort to the forlorn captive. The pleasing certainty that I left them at least in health and peace qualified the bitterness of regret at parting.

CHAP. VI.

THE AMBASSADOR.

RESOLUTELY determined to leave no means unassayed to discover Lancaster's place of confinement, I quitted Kenilworth; but the agents of power so successfully eluded my utmost efforts, that neither stratagem nor bribes could obtain for me the clue leading to his prison. However, my way to Portsea Castle, where I supposed it likely he might be kept in durance, lying through Winchester Park, I judged a few sounding words with old D'Spencer were likely to repay my loss of time. On entering this domain, though I reflected that the owner was the father

of my enemy, and the son himself often celebrated his riotous orgies here; yet I could not forbear admiring, with some degree of pleasure, the enchanting symmetry and taste with which the grounds were laid out; great cost seemed to have been expended, with much labour, in many recent improvements. This charming and extensive demesne, skirting part of the New Forest, was now the seat of old D'Spencer, being a grant from the partial King.

The Earl's well known character for worth and frankness cherished some hope that I might be furnished with material news relative to the situation of Lancaster. Whilst resting against a towering oak, the wide expanding branches of which shadowed a pavilion (supported by pillars, and crowned with a lofty cupoal) from the scorching rays of the sun; mentally extolling the wondrous combined beauties

of art and nature round me, I perceived advancing towards the mansion, an infirm elderly man, leaning on two domestics. My suspicions were true; on nearer approach, I recognized the Earl of Winchester returning from a morning saunter through the parks. Our complimentary greetings over, 'my Lord,' said the venerable D'Spencer, 'I am not unacquainted with your having been expelled your paternal roof, and banished the court as a rebel; impressed with very different ideas of Lord Cornwall, I shall think myself honoured if he will accept my utmost stretch of good offices to serve him; every comfort that Winchester Castle can afford are his. Come, Alfred,' continued he, with the cordial cheerfulness of urbanity, 'my kindness is but a debt which my son's ill conduct towards you has laid upon me;—this way, we shall find the noon repast prepared, share it with me now and ever.' Al-

though rest would have been far the most timely and acceptable refreshment, yet I could not decline the honest invitation of my gentle conductor. Ah! thought I, what hidden one act of goodness can young D'Spencer have done to deserve such a father! I, alas! have none—but this was envy, I checked its progress, and looked only to the virtues of my revered host.

Our repast finished, and the servants retired, the Earl, who had considerately till this moment delayed the important news, informed me that my friend Montford was then within those walls; Winchester Castle having been purposely chosen by Edward, on account of its strength and distance from the metropolis. At this intelligence I, in an instant, seemed to have imbibed the very spirit of the fiery Lancaster; and, starting up, exclaimed,

'Oh! where is Montford? Shew me the dungeon that confines all of worth and life!' The benign and gracious features of the Earl were, in my fancy, now transformed to the stern and detested aspect of a ruffian jailor. I rudely pushed him by, and would have passed I knew not whither. Winchester's humanity and good sense made allowance for the momentary phrenzy that I was seized with, and with the mildness of an angel, calmly offered to conduct me to him. My distraction now taking another turn, I could have fallen at his feet and worshipped him, so much was I elated at the rapturous idea of again seeing Montford.

The doors of his apartment were not only strongly barricadoed without, but guarded by two armed officers. At first, I was shocked at this sight, but presently recollected that securing the mighty Lancaster with the greatest

precaution, was rather the dutiful performance of a trust, than an over-compliance with the tyrannical will of the royal persecutor.

On a signal from the Earl, the door was opened, and the officers retired. We entered: there indeed was Henry, his head leaning on his hand, and his eyes fixed on the ground. A sullen, but haughty resignation appeared on his countenance; for, as I afterwards understood, he every moment expected to be shewn an order for his private execution. From the prisoner my eyes wandered round the room; the hangings and furniture of which were elegant and costly in the extreme, light was admitted by a window near the lofty ceiling; on the [illegible] a lute, and at the opposite side I distinguished a small library, consisting of the choicest manuscripts. I was

scription of this *prison* may be sufficient to give you some idea of the excellence of Winchester's heart; but shackles, though cut in adamant, are shackles still.

Again I looked at Lancaster; he had not stirred since our entrance. 'Montford!' cried I. He looked up, and at sight of me, no language can paint the ecstatic flame that animated his features. Winchester was much affected, and, notwithstanding all the confidence he supposed we might place in him, yet delicately imagining that the agent of the Crown was not a welcome witness to such a scene, he presently withdrew.

With impatience I enquired of Lancaster what pretext had been used to justify the imprisonment of a Peer, and Prince of England's realm and royal blood.

'If I can but regain my liberty,' replied he, 'no longer will I follow, thro' devious paths, the softly-pacing Cornwall, but onward cut my way to D'Spencer's life-blood, led only by an impulse——Here, here it glows! (furiously striking his breast and forehead). Gaveston, for this last indignity, I will exert my utmost efforts; sacrifice peace, fortune, and existence at an endeavour to curb the stretch of regal power, which being intrusted to a Hell-Kite, has decoyed a guiltless man from the pale of life, and deprived me, heretofore an attached subject, of liberty. Subject! hence! I disclaim—— To excel is to command; and what excellence shines in the pitiful soul of the childish Edward?' In vain I beseeched Montford to be calm; he still continued, and I was forced to rest with the hope that the vehemence of his fury would shortly spend itself. 'A monarch,' resumed he, 'should be the delegate of God,

who rules alone all wise, and what ray from the Divine Omniscience beams in the soul of the despicable Edward? Cornwall, can I pronounce it without bursting into madness? I have been snatched from air and light, confined in an odious dungeon for above ten days, loaded with irons.'

Though I seemed to listen to his impassioned expressions with composure (for I would not aggravate his anguish by an irritable condolence), yet my feelings of resentment, glossed over with a sad smile of comfort, were perhaps equal to his own. However, to amuse and soothe his mind, I gave him a circumstantial detail of the late occurrences at Kenilworth. As I designed, my words gradually dispelled that cloud of sorrow in which his senses were enwrapped; he appeared to receive pleasure, and indeed consolation, from my account of Emma's recovery;

but I would not suffer him to dwell long even upon this pleasing reflection, lest the ardour of his impatience to be restored to his relatives might increase his malady, for my poor friend was indeed sick with extreme grief, and the acute sense of his wrongs. Rather against my desire, for I wished him to be calm, he related the rapid succession of accidents that had befallen him since our separation.

'The road,' said Montford, 'to the Savoy palace lying through Westminster, I could not forbear alighting at the Abbey as I passed it; and, under pretence of attending Sexte, I visited, with awful reverence, my father's tomb. Oh, Alfred! the sight of it recalled fresh to memory the impulse that stimulated me, when at the entrance of that sepulchre, to hew the assassin D'Spencer piece-meal, and scatter his mangled limbs as a pious offering over

the honoured corpse of the murdered Lancaster; by your officious prevention of the deed you have, though unknowingly, become a party in the death of the godlike Carlisle, and have sowed the seeds from which will spring endless strife, woe, and bloodshed. But excuse this incoherent rhapsody, I will proceed (though I trespass on your patience) with some degree of method.

'When we parted at Trefusis Castle I rode with all speed towards the capital: having lingered about two hours at Thorney, I pursued my journey; but again stopped at the great conduit, between Queen Eleanor's Cross and St. James's Hospital, in the village of Charing, a mile and a half from London, to water the horses. Fatigued and heavy at heart, I dismounted, and sat down on a bank beneath a hedge, my eyes involuntarily bent on the Abbey, which contained the remains of him, since

whose death I have enjoyed but little peace. The sound of horses feet caused me to look towards the London road, and I beheld a middle-aged man, by his air and equipage a person of rank, mounted on a white courser, that, as if proud of its burden, neighed and pawed the ground; his features struck me as having seen them before, and immediately I recognized the stranger to be Lord Carlisle, brother in-law to young D'Spencer. With real shame, Cornwall, do I own it, I gave full rein to the fury of the moment, stifling the gentle voice of reason; it whispered 'That man, though allied to thy foe, hath never wronged thee.' My already heated imagination was fired by the recollection of a vague rumour, that Carlisle abetted D'Spencer in most of his enormities: but I would not suffer myself to reflect whence this report derived its poisoned source, else I should have most certainly disbelieved the in-

sidious slanders circulated by Maltravers, on the ignominious dismissal of the *illustrious* slave from Carlisle's service. Invoking the spirit of my father to give strength to my arm, I vaulted on my steed, commanding Anselm, on pain of incurring instant death, to ride on to the Savoy: not being able to guess my intentions, and terrified at my looks and menace, he put spurs to his horse, and was out of sight in a few minutes. I then rode towards Carlisle with every gesture of resentment and defiance, and, "Harcla," cried I, drawing, "prove to me whether your skill at defence is equal to your adroitness in the commission of wrongs." He looked at me with evident marks of astonishment, then waving his hand for his attendants to fall back, he approached, saying, "young man, condescend to explain the meaning of your hostile salutation:" This shew of calm indifference did but irritate me the more. "You stir not

hence," resumed I with increased violence of acrimony, "till fate decides which falls. Report proclaims you an accomplice in your kinsman, the base D'Spencer's crimes; prove your innocence from this charge by the sword; draw, and defend yourself." He did: fierce yet unequal was the contest: he preserving a contemptuous silence, warded off my strokes; and I, though I sought his death, often, by my furious impetuosity, only cut the air. Enraged at his apparent scorn (for his mode of fighting seemed rather the sportive skill of a tilter than the resolute opposition of a warlike antagonist) I sent a blow that shivered both our weapons. "Are you satisfied, hot-headed stripling," said he, "or must your raging fire be quenched with blood?" perhaps your own; consider, and take a few moments breathing time." This sarcasm added fuel to the flame; I grasped my faulchion, and rushed like lightning on him; but, in

endeavouring to make, as I thought, a decisive plunge at his breast, he, with inimitable superiority of address, eluded my point, and with a sleight disarmed me. Overwhelmed with shame and disappointment, I threw myself from my horse, and folding my arms in sullen discontent, deigned not to cast my eyes on him whom I was obliged to acknowledge conqueror.

"Rash and impious youth!" cried Carlisle, leaning on both the weapons fixed in the saddle of his horse, and advancing towards the spot where I stood, "why sport with your own life, and force into combat one who cannot have done you an injury? Speak, there is some mystery hid under the apparent distraction of your conduct, yet your unhappy impetuosity precluded all attempt at an explanation." He paused; but on my silence continued, 'May I know who it is that has made this

unaccountable attack upon my life? your's, though provoked to the contrary, I may without much vanity declare I have saved; you cast a blemish on my honour and my courage:—had I by words tried to refute your calumnious charge, both with some shew of justice might have been questioned, therefore, my sword has been my advocate; if it has taught you a lesson of candour, let me hear what you may as yet consider truth,—give me another chance, that of reason, for acquittal in your opinion. What are those heinous crimes you alledge against me; and, perhaps, without a farther appeal to arms, you may be convinced I have been much injured by your accusation?' Again he paused, and then,—" Come, young Sir, be not abashed, I really admire your valour, though your mode of signalizing it in this instance savours a little of madness. It has not communicated anger to me; I would, if I

dared, take you by the hand." Cornwall, this was not to be withstood,—my haughty spirit sunk, my heart melted, and I threw myself on my knee: 'Carlisle,' said I, 'you have doubly conquered; not only hostily subdued me, but triumphed over my ferocity of temper; I blush to acknowledge it, but in him whom you have cause to think light of, you see the Earl of Lancaster.' Carlisle, at the word, sprang from his horse, and raising me, said, "Let the remembrance of the past be buried in this embrace."

'How poor, how despicable my conduct appeared, when compared with the easy affability of this good natured nobleman! "Here, Montford," said he, "accept this sword, whilst I keep your's, not as a remembrance of victory, but a token of esteem. Come, now, tell me what has my brother D'Spencer done to incur the detestation you seem

to hold him in?" 'Brother!' replied I, 'disown him, Carlisle, there can be no affinity between you. D'Spencer is a—murderer!' The Earl started, then lifting his hands and eyes to heaven, in a low tone he ejaculated: "Forbid it, Heaven!" After what had passed between us, you cannot blame me, Gaveston, for revealing to Carlisle the circumstances attending my father's death. Whilst in the full force of my melancholy story, I chanced to turn towards the spot where we had fought; on the ground lay a paper: I snatched it; it was a letter sealed, and directed, "Sir Thomas Guerney, Scoone.' You have cause to remember this Guerney, the faithless domestic and assassin of Gloucester, in Scotland, once the vile agent of the Queen, lately created a knight, and now the tool of D'Spencer. The name justified the action, and before Carlisle had time to acquaint me that

the paper had dropt from his vest, I tore it open, and read aloud—

"Dear, and ever faithful Guerney! your letter delivered to me by Maltravers filled me with the sincerest joy. Your information is true: wonderful revolutions indeed have taken place at Court since your departure from England! The aspiring Thomas of Lancaster has been forced to pay the debt which he contracted with nature. I, my friend, as you intimate, acted as agent between them; but, as you rightly remark, it was in self-defence; for had he lived till the morning sun arose, I should have been arraigned for my life, and, notwithstanding Edward's authority, might have fallen into the hands of the testy Barons: so, Guerney, I made sure of their head, by delivering him into the custody of Goodman Death. The next on my list is Gilbert

of Gloucester, whose title, effects, and lands are now mine:—but in truth, the return of the renowned Pierce of Gaveston, some time back, whom Edward and the kingdom looked upon as dead, panic struck me; that that gave his Highness inexpressible pleasure, proved to me a source of unutterable dismay; my favour with Edward depended on as slight a link as a spider's thread, which Gaveston, had he lived, could have broken by a breath; but the vindictive nobles, headed by the glorious minstrel Beauchamp of Warwick, decapitated my rival, and transformed the flimsy cobweb into a chain of adamant, by which I now hold the King. Maugre the sneers and threats of the saucy Peers, D'Spencer will stand his ground till either he or his royal friend are laid under it. The Queen, that other candidate for Edward's attention, execrates, yet envies me:—let her,—I look upon envy as a compliment, being the most

unequivocal acknowledgment of my superiour merit. Vain and beautiful Isabel! I wish thee no further punishment for thy daily attempts to ruin me in the opinion of my Sovereign, than that thou mayest live to cast an eye at thy mirror on thy fifty-ninth birth day. Guerney, you cannot but remember young Gaveston, who, when an infant, escaped your and Maltravers's ready steel;—he has had his day,—blazed like a comet! but is now banished Edward's presence. I have reason to rejoice, for Cornwall, indeed, was a formidable rival. That sympathy and antipathy are one and the same thing is certain, for though I hate young Lancaster, and the presumptuous stripling, Alfred Gaveston, my heart, like him, pays homage to the perfections of Blanche de Montford. But, Guerney, I have long desired to inquire of thee who is this Maltravers?—he appears to me somewhat above his present condition;

you have been much together—acquaint me in your next. He is now my Land Steward, and often do I overhear him murmuring at the labour and servility of his employment. Can it proceed from his consciousness of meriting a a nobler office? Or is it like, as in many others, only an affectation of which he himself is ignorant? I am inclined to think so, and imagine that if I were to place another in his situation, he would forgo the ease of doing nothing, rather than suffer a fellow to have the preference. My brother-in-law, Lord Carlisle, is just arrived at Baynard's Castle; he comes to take his leave on his quitting England for Scotland, whither he is sent by Edward in the capacity of a private Ambassador to grey-capped Baliol, with a pompous retinue, and a packet of obscure unmeaning scrawls. The truth is, my dear Guerney, the only man I stand in dread of on our hanging lump of twirling earth is this

kinsman of mine. He arrived about a month ago from Spain; and I, ever feeling an insurmountable restraint in his presence, have prevailed on my royal Lord to send him into an honourable banishment for a time, that he may not, by his stern severity, throw a damp on the pleasures of the Court: in truth, I am a rare statesman; the lofty and surly leviathan of public favour took the gilded bait, and considers himself highly dignified by his Sovereign's exalting him to such an eminent station. I am confident that I am no favourite of this peevish Carlisle, and beshrew me if I value him; but to keep up appearances, we met with every token of the warmest cordiality. However, hypocrisy getting tired with holding her mask so long between us, soon dropt her weary arm, and we parted with indifference: I with a farewell, and prosper noble Carlisle! he with a sage apostrophe,

ending with—"you are now, I am told, (saving the throne) at the very pinnacle of power—but beware, as innocence is a balm in adversity, so in prosperity guilt is a thorn.' As the mouthing monk was quitting the castle, I recollected that in passing Scoone he might leave this packet with you; for, tho' I cannot bring myself to join in general admiration, yet I would place more reliance on his probity than on any man in Europe: no danger is, therefore, incurred by entrusting this with him. I wish you could come to England, not only for the advantage accruing to yourself from my favour with his Highness, but you, by your ready wit and inimitable policy, are the most proper person to put in execution the plot I am brooding on against Lancaster and Cornwall. I know not where either of them are now, but I will hunt the young lions from their coverts, and drive them into the subtle toils I am at this mo-

ment spreading. Carlisle waits
letter; and Juba, the mettled c
you presented me when a boy
impatient at the gate to carry
Theobald's, where I intend passi
ensuing Christmas. Peace to yo
Guerney! weigh well what I ha
timated to you, and for the use c
excellent qualities depend on tl
titude of

HUGH D'SPE

Baynard's Castle,
This 22d of September, 1310.

CHAP VII.

PEINE FORTE ET DURE.

'THE iniquitous, yet useful secrets this letter revealed, rendered an apology for my breaking it open somewhat needless. A new prospect of D'Spencer's villainy had no novelty for me; but conceive, Cornwall, what effect the sudden disclosure of such a mass of craft and treachery had upon Carlisle. Whilst I read the paper I noted the various passions of his soul working in his agitated frame: I took the advantage of the confusion which absorbed him in a pause of silent vexation, to transcribe the heads of this infamous scroll on my tablets; rightly supposing that Carlisle, notwithstand-

ing his firm dependance on his spotless character for veracity, would wish to preserve the letter, as an indisputable voucher of D'Spencer's conduct, so very flagitious in this particular, that it seemed to want every aid of credibility.

"D'Spencer a murderer!" exclaimed the Earl,—"a robber!—a dissembling caitiff! Did, then, thy father," addressing me, "the noble Thomas of Lancaster, fall by his miscreant hand? Kill the parent, and aspire to the daughter! and his rapines wrest the fair inheritance from the orphan Gavestons; lay nets to enmesh those whom he has already beyond measure injured; and make me an instrument to work in his shameless machinations! I'll instantly to Theobald's, and punish him whom henceforth I disclaim as a relative. Montford, as I before averred, my honour has ever been

considered inviolate; it has not yet been blown upon by the breath of slander. Farewell! my Lord," continued the Earl; 'may Heaven, prudence, and your own arm, protect you from the snares of D'Spencer!"

We were taking leave, when it struck me, that as D'Spencer knew not, by his letter to Guerney, where either you, Gaveston, or myself, were, or seemed to have the least suspicion that we possessed incontestible proofs of his committing the homicide; it were better for Carlisle not to drop our names before his brother, and, particularly, to conceal his late rencontre with me. I gave, as an apology to the Earl for prompting him to a duplicity so repugnant to the strict integrity of his nature, the danger we both incurred by D'Spencer's learning we were now so much within his

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power; he would scarce then tr
the uncertain means of spreadin
for the young lions, as it pleasec
to term us; but, by a sure, yet c
blow, attempt, and, perhaps, i
end, accomplish his designs.

"My Lord," replied the Earl,
that would break his word woul
scruple at violating the most sc
oath. I cannot, with justice t
own ideas of propriety, absolutely
that I have seen and conversed
you, although I am interrogate
one whose own falsehood demand
a return of truth, and whose onl
tive is to persecute you to death."
stopt: "Then, Lancaster," sai
"rest satisfied, I will perish
betray you." Unable to guess
meaning, and fearful of extendin
offences towards him by requesti
explanation, I respectfully kisse

hand, and buckling on our exchanged swords, we parted; he for Theobald's, and I directly to London.

'But, Cornwall, for your more ease and satisfaction, suffer me to pass over the uninteresting particulars that befell me at the Savoy, and immediately follow Carlisle.

'On his arrival at Theobald's, he met D'Spencer, in an elegant undress, walking on a spacious lawn near the palace: but at sight of Carlisle the traitor stood motionless with dismay and conjecture, supposing that the Earl had by this time at least reached the borders of Scotland. However, concealing his extreme perplexity, he ran to meet him, and, with his natural effrontery, carelessly welcomed him to Theobald's; though, at the same time, he could not avoid expressing some surprise at this sudden and very unex-

pected return. The Earl for answer drew forth the letter, and, unfolding, displayed it full before D'Spencer, who, on seeing his own, indeed, *black* characters, turned pale and trembled. Carlisle sternly asked him if he knew not the writing? D'Spencer, a few minutes spent in visible agitation, recovered his wonted audacity, and haughtily replied: "So, this is the renowned Earl of Carlisle! the man whose name for rectitude of principles is become a proverb! This is the man who boasts, that since first the light of reason dawned on his mind he stands self acquitted of never having uttered a falsehood!"

"I'd scorn to commit an act," replied Carlisle, "that could not in some measure be justified. The paper was not opened by me, or through my means." "This illustrates," said D'Spencer, with the crafty dissimulation

of the consummate hypocrite, the bold assurance of a powerful courtier, and the sarcastic sneer peculiar to his character,—"this illustrates the philosophical axiom, that all human nature, without exception, is fallible, and that perfection is beyond the reach of man. A credulous world looked upon you, my Lord, as the very *ne plus ultra* of truth and probity; but, by my life, it shall be undeceived: I will not become a party in the imposition. By your seclusion from Court you may not comprehend the exalted station I now hold: See, I wear the regal power nearly at my finger's end. This," vauntingly displaying the royal signet given him by Edward, "this stamps my will into a law; by this I prolong the culprit's life, or seal the doom of the rebellious subject. You will find the convex of this on the dispatches confided to you to deliver to Baliol of Scotland." Carlisle's heart throbbed;

but the insolent scoffer continued,—"Whilst D'Spencer holds England in bonds and trammels, her abject senseless sons wink at what they cannot redress; and, swelling with ideal grandeur and pomposity, impotently boast the invaluable privileges of their *Magna Charta*, and their Juries, and their act of *Habeas Corpus*, and all the rest of their tinselled ornaments of freedom. Now judge, good angry brother, whether it is policy to irritate D'Spencer."

"Cease, most splendid ruffian!" said the Earl; then lowering his voice, "should Fate deliver you to this, (drawing) in your grave shall be buried my knowledge of your crimes; but think not it is to screen thy memory from deserved obloquy, no, it will be in pity to those relatives you have disgraced, your excellent father, and my wife, your virtuous sister. Come, our bodies are both uncased, and our hands

matched in weapons; we are now alone, we may be prevented, let me be speedy in doing my country and the world a service."

'D'Spencer, contemptuously smiling, flourished out his rapier with a pompous brandish, saying, "I am ever ready to accept, no matter whence the challenge, from Bacchus, Venus, or Bellona." Then, with the studied graces of a professed tilter, he aimed his weapon at Carlisle, which he striking down, the point glancing, entered the fleshy part of his leg. The Earl seemed not to feel the wound, but darting a home lunge at his adversary, the sword, instead of piercing D'Spencer as it must naturally have done, with a violent recoil, nearly flew from Carlisle's hand. However, the blow staggering D'Spencer, he reeled and fell. The Earl determined to ascertain the truth of what he conjectured could be alone the cause

of his antagonist's thus escaping the stroke, darted downwards, and seizing him by the throat, tore open his vest. I leave you to picture the excess of his indignation on discovering that D'Spencer, beneath his silken apparel, was cased in steel. He set his foot on the prostrate wretch, who, in vain, struggled to get loose. The fiend of wrath whispered the Earl, "Use not with compassionate lenity the despicable poltroon, but dispatch." When he recollected that the varlet's blood circulated thro' the heart of his wife, D'Spencer's sister, he held in the air the motionless uplifted weapon. Thus were situated the combatants when Carlisle started from the excruciating sensation of a stab deep in his left shoulder: he looked round, no human creature met his eye excepting the panting miscreant, who still lay writhing under the nervous tread of his victor. The precious tide gushing from the orifice, deluged the

weapon in its progress, and besprinkled D'Spencer, who, from the faintness occasioned by the Earl's loss of blood, now easily disengaged himself from the hold of his enfeebled adversary. Carlisle, in vain, endeavoured to wrench the poniard from his shoulder; when he chanced to grasp the hilt he but enlarged the gap, and ploughed the quivering flesh. Nature exhausted, he fell in the arms of those whom D'Spencer had commanded to seize him. Duty, as vassals, obliged them to obey their Lord; but as men, possessed of hearts fraught with compassion, they bore him to a bed, and acquainted the chirurgeons, who hastened to his relief. Having exerted their utmost skill in attempts to retain life, they at length succeeded in staunching the blood, and in the course of a few hours pronounced the Earl out of danger. But, notwithstanding their earnest entreaties to suffer him to regain strength, by re-

maining a few days longer under their care, D'Spencer commanded him to be placed in a litter the next morning; and, in a state even worse than when he entered it, sent him from the palace to Westminster, there to answer before his assembled peers to the slanderous charge of conspiring against the royal person.

'A sort of restless anxiety and confusion of intellect, ever attendant on a mind involved in all the distracting horrors of determined villiany, prevented D'Spencer from reflecting that the Earl, whilst he had the letter, could, in a great measure, refute the accusation, by producing it as an indisputable witness of his brother's guilt. Carlisle, at D'Spencer's intimating its propriety, was searched, and the fatal paper found in the folds of his robe; where, conscious of its value, and rightly suspecting D'Spencer would attempt to recover

it, he had secreted the cursed scrawl. A glow of joy, which the surrounding courtiers falsely attributed to the grateful zeal he professed for his royal friend, animated the whole frame of the traitorous hypocrite at sight of it; he sprung forward, and, as the clerk was about to open the letter, he wrested it from him, and glancing his eyes hastily over the page, exclaimed, "This is a joint summons from the Earls of Cornwall and Lancaster to my kinsman, requiring his attendance at Northampton, there to meet a band of nobles, the effects of whose secret consultations will, ere the feast of Pentecost, cause all Europe to tremble" D'Spencer read this extemporary falsehood, devoid of the smallest hesitation, till coming to the signatures: though he had previously declared it was written by us, his ideas became so perplexed that our names refused utterance; feigning frantic violence, and, as if he broke off

suddenly, he tore it to pieces, and, scattering the fragments, cried, "like this paper may all rebels perish!" But, Gaveston, I am too minute, spare me the heart excruciating task of deliberately expatiating on the shameful process of a trial, which terminated with executing the most diabolical deed ever committed under the specious name of justice. Carlisle, his whole system convulsed with the agonized monotonous throes of an ague, and sighing from the rending anguish of his bursting wound, answered only by contemptuous glances the ensnaring interrogatories of his venal judges; who, on his refusing, by a determined silence, to plead to the indictment, recapitulated the evidence of D'Spencer and the base witnesses he had brought: the fiends of law, or rather lawless power, so successfully wound their purpose to the point they aimed at, that after much subtle arguing, Carlisle's crime was adjudged

felony. The Earl saw their crafty drift, and now indignation suppressed his voice; scarce crediting the reality of this unprecedented procedure, he replied not to the questions put to him, and was therefore condemned to the punishment of *Peine forte et dure.*

'Scarce had his glorious spirit disengaged itself from the emaciated and tortured body, than I burst into the prison. How I learnt the above particulars, or how I gained admittance of the keepers, I cannot now recollect, for I acted more through instinct than reason. By the pale reflection of a torch, I beheld a sight which harrowed up my soul, and stopt the very faculty of breathing; on the bare ground lay the form of the expiring Earl, his extended limbs were fastened by cords to the extremities of the dungeon; on his chest was piled a weight of iron, which, when the wretched sufferer breathed,

crushed the bones and pressed the throbbing heart; whilst near him stood an officer, who attempted, as his duty of office prescribed, to force into his mouth a small piece of barley bread. An exclamation of mingled horror and compassion burst from my lips, and I dropt senseless on the earth. A long and frightful trance was broken by the loud clashing of chains. Oh, Alfred! you who so well know your friend, may imagine the furious transport of resentment which fired my brain at discovering myself rivetted by links of iron to the huge buttresses jutting from the damp walls of a prison!

'I will not, cannot, give you a detail of the many instances of ferocious ignomy heaped upon me whilst thus I lay enthralled; the very idea that a Montford should have been manacled and subject to the scowling looks and injurious scoffs of authoritative hinds,

stifles all the soft emotions of humanity, and urges me to invoke the aid of Heaven, to scourge with every blasting ill D'Spencer, that brood of darkness, who, without cause, consigned me to the disgrace of durance, and forced me to bear, like a transgressing carle, the dishonourable weight of fetters. Hapless Carlisle, too! when Heaven pardons wilful murder Corruption reigns above!'

Lancaster paused, but his voice still vibrated on my heart; an attempt at soothing his mind at such a juncture would have been as vain as futily endeavouring to restore calmness to the boisterous billows of a fermented ocean, or bidding the rude howlings of the northern wind to cease. Fearful of irritating his incensed imagination by opposing the torrent of his ire, I politically joined him in invective against his unjust oppressors, and avowed my

fixed intention to share his prison, or try every means within my power to procure his enlargement. An expedient, by which I trusted he might escape from Winchester Castle, presented itself: I communicated it to him; he acquiesced in its practicability, but haughtily disdained the very mention of owing his safety to the unmanly subterfuge, as he termed it, of pitifully skulking from his persecutors.

CHAP. VIII.

A RASH BLOW.

GRACIOUS Heaven! How mysterious thy ways! How seemingly unjust and severe thy ordinances! By determined perseverance in argument and entreaty I had at length gained Montford to my wish, when a gentle rustling in the room caused us to start, and endeavour to find from whence the noise proceeded. Lancaster snatched m dagger from my belt, ran to a wardrobe at the farther end of the room; and I, drawing my sword, made towards the outward door, which, on Winchester's leaving us, I had taken the precaution to fasten by a slight bolt, lest any of the guards should have intruded, and

thereby interrupted our converse. An exclamation, conveying to my mind every horrid sensation that the soul of man is capable of receiving, burst from the lips of Lancaster.

'Baffled in all our projects!' cried he: 'take this, thou base listener! thou robber of the heart!' 'Hold thy sacrilegious hand,' cried I, 'rash Montford!' But ere I spoke, the deadly blow was struck, and Lancaster stood a murderer.

My guilty friend, darting down, dragged forth from beneath the robes that concealed it, the breathless victim of his intemperate fury: but the exquisite torments of a consumptive death could not surpass the effects of that remorse which seized on his mind, and shone forth in unequivocal tokens of anguish throughout his whole frame, when he *beheld* the lifeless body. Picture a boy

of about ten years of age; his beauteous mein the very emblem of good-nature, truth, and simplicity; a smile dimpling his fading cheek, was, by the finger of death, distorted into a convulsion; one little hand pressed his bleeding bosom, the other grasped an arrow.

Montford stood petrified in all the accumulated passions of grief, agony, and compunction; then folding the youth in his arms, he breathed on the pale lips, madly implored the Almighty to re-animate the stiffening corse, and, by prayers and orisons, hoped to deprecate the wrath ever menacing an homicide.

'Martyred innocent!' groaned the afflicted Lancaster—'sweet blossom! nipped in the loveliness of ripening promise!' Then, wildly clasping his hands, he knelt, and added, 'Beati-

fied spirit! art thou yet fled to thy native sky, or dost thou still hover round this fatal spot; perhaps, compassionately bedewing, with ambrosial tears of charity and pardon, the blood-stained hand of thy assassin? Great God!' continued he, with encreased fervour of emphasis, look, and action, 'I acknowledge thy justice! My impious doubts of thy existence are now most memorably and awfully punished; for, by the appalling throes which tear the very fibres of my shrinking heart, I feel there is one above, supreme in majesty, who hath thus struck me down, whilst a ray of comfort, faintly gleaming through the misty horrors of my mind, leaves me all to hope from thy goodness — thy clemency—thy mercy!'

He ceased; and sunk trembling and pale as our first parent when he hung, grief struck, over the gory body of

his child. With swimming eyes I gazed alternately at the melancholy objects stretched at my feet, and inwardly ejaculated—'Adored be that Omniscient Power, who, piercing thro' the veil of futurity, and scanning the book of Fate, hath thus numbered among the blessed elect, one whom the world might have, ere he had reached the bloom of manhood, seduced into the destructive flower-sprinkled, but thorn-planted paths of vice, perhaps never to return! Praised be the humane hand that timely probes the wound, and administers corrosive, though, in the end, healing simples; nor, through neglect, abandons it to the envenomed malice of its nature, and then, hopeless of a cure, and disgusted at its encreased virulence, gashes, tears, and resigns it to putrefaction!' The Saviour of mankind perhaps thus eradicated from Montford's breast that frontless presumption and vehemence

of spirit which, on the slightest disappointment, caused him to rail at the decrees of Providence; together with that inviolable implacability he preserved against those who unhappily had, either by chance or premeditation, transgressed the laws of piety and virtue, by nominating himself, all vain and self sufficient, to give way to the shameful impulse of ungovernable rage, and take the spotless life of a child, who, nevertheless, was, by the inscrutable will of Fate, pre-ordained to join the angelic host, and revel in the effulgent rays emitted from the throne of him, who, though he illumines the universe, is himself veiled in impenetrable clouds of darkness, ere the orb of light, that gilds this terrestrial world of misery, had sunk beneath the horizon.

Winchester now entering the room, heightened, by his presence, the sor-

row of the moment. A speaking look from Lancaster conveyed a fund of intelligence to the venerable Earl, who, sadly sighing, stooped, and lifted the little form across his knee. With anxiety and a forlorn hope he felt the pulse, and put his hand on the breast; but, alas! its spiritual inhabitant had fled, and throbs responsed not to his wish. Whilst exerting every means to obtain a certainty that the child was past recall, holding a mirror to the mouth, and bathing the most sensitive parts of the body with aqua vitæ, the tender corpse stiffened, and the countenance visibly changed. Winchester slowly rising, breathed a prayer, and stretched the dead on a couch; then opening a large screen, drew it across the room, by which it, together with the drenched floor and garments, were hid from the sight of those who might enter the chamber.

Chaucer, you may accuse me of dotage and prolixity in relating the following incident; yet, trifling as it may appear to you, it indelibly impressed on my mind a sacred awe of God's sure vengeance, which displayed itself even in the insignificant prattle of a child, by driving the barbed dart of remorse deeper to the heart of the wretched infanticide.

A mournful cessation of all sound, for our various emotions were too sharp to suffer us to speak, ensued, until a voice, loudly calling on the Earl, broke the gloom of silence, and caused both Winchester and myself to rouze from our inertitude. As for my poor friend, he sat, with entwined arms, overwhelmed in a chaos of joyless retrospect, like the statue of Despair: vacant and inanimate were those eyes, fixed on the ground; feverish his pulse; and burning was the forehead that

rested against a marble column supporting an urn, on which was carved, in basso relievo, the crucifixion of our Lord; it contained part of the blessed cross, and the consecrated bones of St. Augustin, given to the Earl by the pious Abbot of Westminster.

A young page, regardless of old D'Spencer's endeavours to hinder him, stepping beyond the threshold of the door, now burst in. 'Where's Carrol, my Lord?' said the boy, addressing the Earl; 'Carrol has run away with my arrow.' Montford, starting from his lethargy, looked grievously at the stripling, who continued his complaints, 'teizing and ill-natured he is to delight in mischief!' 'Ah, Alan!' replied the Earl, laying his hand on the child's head, 'all froward taunts and mutual offices of friendship betwixt Carrol and thyself are for ever at an end.' 'He came in

here by the wardrobe door,' cried the youth, too much bent on regaining his toy to mind the Earl's reply. He was running towards the ensanguined spot, when Winchester hastily catching at his mantle, exclaimed, 'Alan, Carrol is not there, return to your play.' 'I cannot, my Lord, without my arrow,' retorted the spoiled urchin, who again attempted to make to the wardrobe; when the Earl, desiring me to detain him, let go his hold, and retired behind the screen. The long stay he there made I attributed to the difficulty he met in releasing the fatal trifle from the stiffened joints of the deceased; on his return he presented the mighty object of contention to the child, and desired him to see that his companions had their baskets of flowers ready to decorate and strew the saloon. But in vain did he give his commands; the vexatious youth having narrowly examined the toy, exclaimed, 'this is

not my arrow, mine was quite new, and this is all smeared with red; I shall not have that, my Lord, I will have my own. Carrol!' exclaimed he, and was again going towards the screen, when he suddenly stopped, his whole attention attracted by the singular appearance of Montford. The arrow fell from his hold; he advanced gently, and taking his blood-sprinkled hand, fixed his lovely eyes on my friend, with a look wherein pity, curiosity, and condolement were strongly marked. 'I fancy, my Lord, you have cut your finger? your garments are soiled likewise; it must have bled much. Why, one would imagine you and my Lord had been at archery, for all three of you are sprinkled with blood. Pardon me a moment,' he said, and running to the farther end of the room, returned with a small flasket, from which he poured a rich cordial, and attempted to bathe the hand preparatory to seek-

ing the cicatrice. 'Ah! my love,' said Montford, 'it is my heart that is rent; hast thou a balm of wondrous virtue to alleviate the pains of a deeply wounded spirit?' 'Go, go, officious youngster,' interrupted the Earl, 'and do as I ordered thee.' 'Nay, my Lord,' replied Alan, 'how austere you are got lately! This will cure him; Hubert, by applying it in time, healed a large wound Carrol got on his head the other day, when he fell from the sycamore tree. Come, my Lord, let me see your finger.' He was proceeding in his benevolent intentions, when the Earl, provoked at his stay, and apprehensive that Lancaster's emotions would take a contrary turn, for his cheeks, from a deadly pale, were now flecked with crimson, snatched the child in his arms, and put him outside the door.

Alan, who, from his promptitude in learning, and sprightliness of manners,

had gained a great ascendancy over the Earl, so far from being checked by this violence, was rather the more inflamed with the spirit of provocation. 'Ah, old Lord,' exclaimed he, 'you will soon get as cruel as Heliogabalus, not to let me lave his finger. Well then, my Lord, give me that unseemly arrow, it is better than none.' He still kept muttering at the door; but on the Earl's sliding the bolt he at length ran away, loudly calling on Carrol to return him his favourite toy.

Winchester now acquainted us with a circumstance the foregoing grievous catastrophe had prevented his mentioning, or rather the sight he witnessed at entering the room had operated with the same effect on his mind as a Lethean draught; he forgot the past by mournfully contemplating the scene before him. Anxious to qualify a dismal truth, he prefaced his infor-

mation by assurances, which in a great measure prepared us to receive, with becoming resignation, whatever adverse fortune had next to shower upon our defenceless heads.

'It is necessary, my Lords,' said he, 'to remind you of your present situations; you (addressing Montford), are under attainder for high treason; and you, Cornwall, are proscribed the court: by remaining an hour longer in this castle you will incur the penalty of death, which the King pronounced, should you be found within a certain distance from his person. He comes, and with him my son.'

Lancaster and myself were about to interrupt the Earl, but he imposed silence, and continued, 'I will not wrong the generous attachment that has from childhood existed between you, by imagining that Lord Lancaster would

wish, for his own gratification, to detain you at the hazard of your life; neither can I suppose that you would forsake your friend at a time when most he stands in want of assistance and consolation. I will undertake to adjust these differences. Be guided by me, young Lords, and let not the ardency of youth prompt you to spurn at the experience of age. Winchester reveres you both, esteems and honours you.—Relying on the pardon of a too partial Sovereign, daring to attempt all that may prove conducive to your safety and future welfare, he throws open your prison doors, and advises, nay commands you to abscond.'

Oh what unfeigned gratulations we returned for this benign, this unexpected, this gracious proof of disinterested benevolence! we each took a hand, and bowing on it, swore eternal gratitude to him, who had thus raised

us from the soul-subduing depths of despair to the heights of cheering hope. But, alas! be you exonerated, respected Winchester, our after progress through life might with propriety be likened unto a luckless traveller, who having slipped from the verge of a slanting precipice, although conscious of approaching destruction, grasps at every slender shrub that presents itself to his dizzy eyes; they yield to his touch; he falls on the huge rocky fragments, which, treacherously giving way, accompany him in his whirling flight, and bury him beneath a weight that, by crushing, forms a tomb to cover the remains of the hapless sufferer.

The sound of horns, and other martial music, proclaimed the approach of Edward and his court. 'Hold! soft!' said Winchester, 'I must leave you and be in waiting to receive my royal

guests; but list, my Lords, and by all that's sacred I conjure you to follow my instructions; we must use the utmost secrecy in our proceedings. That wardrobe will lead you to a small staircase, from the foot of which branch two narrow passages; they are dark and unpleasant, but liberty is well worth the trivial sacrifice of a few minutes passed in sombre and obscurity: be particularly careful in avoiding the left hand avenue, pursue that on the right, it leads immediately to the garden; at the bottom of a long grove of cypress you will see a small green door, here is the key; when passed that, you are beyond the precincts of the Castle: on either side a spacious lawn are several cottages, inhabited by [illegible], do not stop at the first you [illegible], but walk on to the fourth, [illegible] hand; Verrel is the [illegible] wait, and ere long [illegible] horses to carry you beyond the [illegible]

of your persecutors. But pray you mark my words, sorely may you repent taking refuge in the cottage adjoining the palace garden; remember, if necessary, to enquire for Verrel's; but, above all, be silent on what has passed."

Regardless of the surprise his mysterious words could not but occasion in us, he put the key in my hand, and again blessing both, and wishing Lancaster a safe enfranchisement, he left the room, locking the outward door after him, as well to favour the deception of Montford's being still confined, as to prevent any of the servants intruding into the apartment of death. Now that the moment of deliverance was at hand, Montford appeared reluctant to leave his prison: guilt, like a dull weight, hung upon his mind, and seemed to clog the very springs of life. Unavailing were my persuasions and

arguments for him to profit by this fortunate occasion, and obey the commands of our generous host. Whilst using every method to thaw into feeling the frozen apathy of his soul, my ears were shocked by a loud laugh, proceeding from an adjoining chamber, which I guessed to be the saloon where I had dined with the Earl. I listened some time, and, among the heterogeneous sounds, distinguished the voices of the King and young D'Spencer; it was not in the latter the elegant ebullitions of merriment and social gaiety, but the forced convulsion of a sycophant, fulsomely commending, by his intemperate mirth, the despicable attempt at wit in the royal buffoon. Owing to unceasing solicitations, I at last prevailed on Montford to give his opinion on what was best to be done in affairs which now appeared to be wound to a crisis. It was proposed by me, and after much deliberation agreed to by

Lancaster, that he should first make to the cottage, and there wait my joining him, which I promised to do the instant I had secured all the doors from this apartment to the garden gate, as the Earl had desired. To gain the wardrobe it was requisite to go behind the screen, and pass the body, which lay extended (near a high casement) on a white velvet couch. The warlike and invincible Lancaster, who had brained the crested soldier, that stern and gallant chieftain who had cleft many a steel-clad heart, and dealt wounds and havock in the field of slaughter; he who had viewed, without either terror or dismay, though perhaps with commiseration, the lacerated victims of his blade, now shrunk aghast at the bare thought of again beholding the untimely corpse; his limbs trembled, his speech failed, and a minute passed in doubtful silence. On a sudden his countenance

assumed a wild and alarming expression of joy, a faint flush animated his features, he looked to Heaven, and sprang behind the screen.

'Once more,' said he, kneeling beside the body, 'once more let me implore thy mercy, oh God!' He paused, and then, 'yes, revered Winchester, thy rare benevolence demands this sacrifice; in justice to thee, and in compliance to the divine word, enjoining meekness and forbearance on mankind, here, by the precious remains of this murdered infant, I disclaim all intention of seeking revenge for my father's premature death. D'Spencer assassinated a powerful enemy; I have sent to the grave a guiltless child; this blood hath quenched my thirst for his, and I do now resign my assumed right of inflicting punishment to thee, Almighty; judgment is thine.'

Montford spent a few minutes in silent devotion, and then rose, saying, 'Cornwall, you will join me at Verrel's cottage.' I promised not to be long, and gave him the key, desiring him to leave it in the door on his reaching the fields. Anxious for his safety, I climbed, by the assistance of the couch on which lay the body of young Carrol, to the casement, and shortly after beheld Lancaster cross the garden, and strike into the cypress grove; I still watched until the winding of the path hid him from my sight. In my hurry to leap down from the window the point of my sword accidentally got entangled in the falling ringlets of the poor youth's hair; having disengaged it, charmed with their soft texture, artless curl and lovely hue, a bright flaxen, I cut off a spiral lock, resolving to keep it as a memento of the combined fatal, yet fortunate, vicissitudes of this day.

Conformable to the Earl's strict injunction, I carefully fastened the wardrobe door outside, and then pursued my way as he had directed, until I arrived at the bottom of a small dark staircase; from this spot branched two narrow passages diametrically opposite. I had not given the requisite attention to Winchester, and now stopt in great dilemma to consider which corridor I should take; I could not recollect whether the interdicted one was to the right or to the left; but leaving all to chance, after some little hesitation I took the latter, with sanguine hopes that it might lead to the garden. An iron door impeded my progress; it was ajar; I opened it, and to my utter confusion beheld a large court-yard, crowded with the royal guards and other attendants, who had accompanied his Highness from London. The grating noise the huge door made in turning on its rusty hinges,

caused a party of the officers, who were walking arm in arm near the opening, to turn. Fearful of being seen, and perhaps recognized, I hastily started back, closing the pondrous mass after me; but in the sudden movement I fell against a person close at my side.—'Beshrew your agility!' exclaimed a voice, 'you had near drove the pommel of my sword into my throat!' This strange incident and stranger words raised a thousand vague uncertainties in my mind: that we were discovered was beyond a doubt, but I wished to know who was the intruder. A new idea now presented itself, as improbable as absurd—perhaps it is Lancaster, thought I, returned, lest, as it has proved, I should miss my way; or belike he has met with some of the domestics of the Castle, and is come back to warn me of our danger. Full of this chimera, I called, 'Hist! Montford, is it you?' 'Hush! this way,' was the re-

ply, which being delivered in a low tremulous tone, confirmed me in the belief that it was Lancaster. As he desired I gave him my hand, and followed silently. When we arrived at the staircase where the corridors divided, he struck into the passage which I should have taken at first; still he did not speak, but continued groping along until we came to a large door (the counterpart of that I had so unluckily opened), and a gleam of light burst suddenly upon us. From the long obscurity in which I had been enveloped, my sight could not bear this quick transition, and I hastily closed my eyes, but still walked on, guided by my taciturn friend, who having gained the cypress grove, stopped and let fall my hand, saying, 'Cornwall, undeceive yourself.' The words and voice flashed conviction. I looked up; how great was my vexation and astonishment, when, instead of Montford, as I expected, I beheld D'Spencer!

CHAP. IX.

A ROYAL BANQUET.

THE consternation occasioned by such an unexpected meeting, could only be surpassed by that I felt at what followed. The moment I saw my error I grasped the hilt of my sword, but was deprived of the power to draw, when the haughty imperious favourite fell at my feet, and, (scarce can it be believed) in terms of the most abject and impressive submission, beseeched my forgiveness for the wrongs he had done me. D'Spencer had hitherto assumed an insufferable loftiness of carriage towards both Lancaster and myself; therefore, as I was not aware of my

own exaltation, I, at first concluded, by his addressing me in such a humiliating style, that he had himself received a recent mortification: but the proudest man can be humble when it answers his purpose. The perfidious flatterer acted his studied part so incomparably perfect, that to one who knew less of his character than I, he might have appeared as meek Repentance personified. Why should a vicious spirit inhabit a fair and pleasing fabric? Maltravers's countenance candidly said, 'trust me not, for I am a villain, a depraved, a confirmed villain!' but D'Spencer, pre-eminent in personal attractions, ensnared admiration and then securely destroyed. Represent to yourself a young man scarce arrived at his fifth lustre; his form, though somewhat effeminate, yet lissome and graceful, the blood mantling in his cheek, his joined hands resting on his half-bent knee, and his eyes fixed on the

ground, as if through diffidence and conscious unworthiness. Such was the figure before me, who, though he wore not the regal trappings or bore the title of King, governed with uncontrolled sway the despotic ruler of England; but I was not to be deceived by these outward appearances of sincerity, fully persuaded that nothing less than adversity, and that of the severest kind, could reform a heart, which, though naturally tainted, yet principally owed its corruption to that uninterrupted and intoxicating flow of prosperity he had met with from his birth. My rage, at his effrontery in daring to face me after what had passed, was raised to indignation, when I reflected that I was singled out to be an object whereon to exercise duplicity; in truth, my pride was hurt at D'Spencer's endeavouring to trepan my credulity in preference to making an attempt on Lan-

caster. He was well aware what would have been his reception from the much injured Montford, and consequently marked me as the likeliest to fall at once into the deep laid toils; but woe to him, he had not sufficient subtilty to discover, that beneath the apparent unruffled mildness of my disposition lurked some small share of penetration and sagacity, and egotism, thou mayest rejoin.

Desirous of nothing more than to be restored to my Sovereign's favour, and thereby have my sentence of banishment revoked, I repaid the tampering courtier in his own coin, dissimulation; spare me from dwelling on that, the necessity of which (though exacted by prudence and an eager wish for a happy understanding to take place between Edward and myself) hurt me in my own esteem.

The forms of reconciliation passed, at D'Spencer's earnest request to accompany him to his Highness, I followed to the door of the royal saloon, which he threw open, and fell back, desiring me to enter. At the farther end I distinguished Edward, surrounded by his Peers, who were examining a bronze statue of the Roman Emperor Trajan. At sight of me the King started forward involuntarily, exclaiming, 'Gaveston!' But my bold and frontless demeanour at Oxford recurring to his memory, he cried, in broken sentences, and in a tone of undissembled anger, 'Ha! traitor, dare you again brave us by your presence? Were not you interdicted the court? Know you not that by this strange infatuation, you have incurred the penalty of death which we pronounced on you, if you ever approached within ten miles of our person? Cornwall, this audacious

violation of your King's mandate exacts the fulfilment of the terms. Apprehend him, Lords, and bear him from our sight.'

I looked around for D'Spencer, but he was gone.—'Treacherous slave!' muttered I, 'is this your friendly interposition with my offended Sovereign?' The nobles, obedient to the word, were advancing, when, to my great relief, D'Spencer entered the room, and catching my hand, led me to Edward. 'My Liege, said he, 'restore Cornwall to that friendship he still deserves; I have not leisure now for explanation, but bestow on him your pardon, 'tis D'Spencer pleads in his behalf, and can my King refuse?' Edward, whose favourite's will was with him a law, raised, and embraced me. 'To prove,' resumed my intercessor, my entire reconciliation with the gallant Cornwall, here,' continued he,

taking a paper from his bosom and signing his name to it, 'by this deed I voluntarily relinquish all right to my late acquired manor of Clenville; be you witness, my Liege, and you, my Lords, to the indentity of this bond, which I here fill up.' He did so, and stretched it to me. I can give no just idea of what were my sensations at this phænomenon: a mist of dubitation and mistrustful uncertainty came over me, and forbad me even forming a thought upon the reality of what passed before my eyes.

The conversation presently became general, the guests dispersed in different parties, and I was left alone, standing in the same spot, with the paper in my still extended hand, like unto a poor rejected woe-struck petitioner. Suddenly, Lord Winchester glided past me, and in a tremulous yet ener-

getic voice, whispered, 'Fly, Cornwall, treachery is near!'

These words, like an emerging sun, dispersed the gathering fogs of confidence that were succeeding distrust; and I resolved, now that I had regained my place in Edwards's court, to frame some respectful excuse, and withdraw; but this was decisively evaded by his Highness, who, with a mixture of gaiety, reproach, and command, insisted upon my taking a seat at his table, and pledging D'Spencer in a goblet, as a token of amity.

At the close of the entertainment, during which I sat in agony for my friend, whom I dreaded would return to learn the cause of my long stay, D'Spencer started up, protesting not a man should stir from his seat until the golden ewers were thrice replenished. Prejudiced as I was against him, me-

thought a malignant glance was thrown on me at the instant. Immersed in suspence, I looked around in gloomy silence, to find looks congenial with my own. Opposite to me sat Tarleton, the Prelate of Hereford, whose features indeed pourtrayed anxiety, uneasiness, and perplexity. When young D'Spencer addressed him, he answered only by a contemptuous scowl, whilst the other seemed bent on offending the churchman by overstrained and ironical civility. Desirous of learning what colour glossed this reprehensible and indecent breach of hospitality, I communicated my mind to Lord Pembroke, who sat near me; by his account I learned, that an affluent and aged kinswoman of Hereford and the D'Spencers, on her rapid declension in health, bequeathed, by will, her landed property and other largesses to the former. This decisive partiality towards the family of Tarleton was beneath the considera-

tion of young D'Spencer, until an occurrence which took place a few months after her making this disposition of her estates, called forth in him revenge. Whilst engaged in some frivolous contention with the prelate, he broke abruptly from him, and took horse for the female's habitation. On his arrival, the smile of audacity brightening every feature, he forced his way into the invalid's apartment: there, by the bed, stood the weeping mourners, as she lay with the pangs of Death upon her. Respect nor decency D'Spencer regarded; he took occasion to clear the chamber of the attendants, and having made fast the door, he with one hand held a dagger to the throat of his venerable relative, whilst with the other he presented for her signature an instrument that made over to him, without reserve and unconditionally, the whole of her wealth, possessions, and personal effects. Although, previous

to his coming, her minutes had been numbered, she in terror scrawled her name, committed the parchments in favour of the other branch of her family to the flames, and expired.

Glorying in this matchless stroke of ingenuity, he hid it not, but blazoned to the world the means by which he had out-witted Hereford; who, on recovering from his amazement, endeavoured, in the courts of law, to prove the invalidity of the reversion thus fraudulently and most infamously obtained. The Bishop's claim was, however, set aside, and D'Spencer laughed and triumphed. 'His Highness,' continued Pembroke, 'encourages the favourite; therefore, Hereford, who expects the next vacant mitre, confines his resentment to threatening glances.' We were here interrupted by the object of my aversion, who, flushed high with wine, exclaimed, 'Brim the bowl, o'erflow the

urns, banish every frown, and dimple every cheek! this night is devoted to revelry and Bacchus.' Inconceivably vexed, I rose, resolving, at all events, to baffle every objection, and hasten to Montford. But strange fatality! the basilisk eyes of D'Spencer fixed me like an astounded bird, and clogged my flight. I remained, and unconscious of what I did, pledged him in a goblet of Rhenish wine.

'Now, Mecænas,' cried D'Spencer, addressing Lord Kent, 'and you, my Augustus, judge if I am not an Horace in rhymes and poesy. Would that that illustrious chaunter, Beauchamp of Warwick, were here, he would make the arches of this high roof resound with the swelling carrols of his jocund voice! Minstrels, twang thy lutes and lyres, raise our souls to ecstacy! courage! neither clip nor thunder it, but give us the sublime lyric I gave thee

to learn, bold and mellow. Mind, my Lord Bishop; here's an ode, peculiarly adapted to your refined and sanctified taste.'

Knew I even the words of this 'sublime lyric,' I would not offend your judgment, Chaucer, by a repetition of them; but the performance strictly answered D'Spencer's wish: for scarcely had the minstrels concluded, than, bursting into a violent and immoderate fit of laughter, he fell back on the couch, and threw his limbs about with all the mad gesticulations of a frantic Bacchanal. Edward, pleased with the quaint conceit, followed his example: the nobles caught the infection; and the whole palace reverberated with the loud echo of their intemperate mirth. The Bishop's forbearance now forsook him: he rose, and, fired at the insult, denounced vengeance, declaring that he would complain to the see of Rome.

'You may complain to the see of Lucifer, if so runs your will,' replied D'Spencer: 'my fancies shall not be curbed by your splenetic humours. 'Tis a charming ballad, and I'll have it chaunted at St. Paul's Cross, and in every town through England.'

Hereford, convulsed with fury, and literally foaming with rage, darted forward, and, regardless of his Sovereign's presence, forgetting his attire, his function, and his dignity, snatched a massy ewer, designing to check the gaiety of the wanton youth. The blow might have been mortal, so true the aim and ponderous the weapon, had not I timely wrested his arm. D'Spencer saw the act, and the blood forsook his cheek—conscience smote him.

At this critical juncture a domestic entered, and delivered me a sealed paper, saying, a countryman wished

to speak with me at the gate. Fearful my attempt to leave the table would be construed into disrespect to his Highness, I hastily concealed the note: but D'Spencer eagerly requested me to consider his father's mansion the Castle of Liberty; and, if such my pleasure, to retire. Whilst he spoke every nerve seemed to be in motion; his flesh actually heaved; some inward passion wrung, as it were, his whole frame to torture. I falsely attributed these symptoms to inebriety; and was rising to go, when I was irresistibly compelled by Edward to drink success to his forces on sea and land. 'A glorious toast!' cried D'Spencer, filling; but on the point of lifting the vessel to his lips, a sudden trembling came over him, and he spilt the wine, a few drops of which fell on the skirts of the Bishop of Hereford's robe. This accident appeared premeditated to the incensed prelate, and he threatened ven-

geance, even to excommunication, accompanying this awful menace with terms in that outrageous and shameful vehemence that would have disgraced a professed wrangler. In vain D'Spencer condescended to affirm he had no intention in what he did, the ecclesiastic, hurried on by the violence of a bitter and exasperated spirit, went so far as to throw out insinuations against the Royal Person. By this he over-shot his mark; for now his lordly adversary spurned further, and, indeed, useless concessions, and insolently swore he defied the utmost power and malevolence of priestcraft. 'Beshrew thy soul!' exclaimed he, 'peevish bigot! if thou wilt spar and cavil at such a foolish trifle, thou shalt have cause whereon to exercise thy ungracious malevolence—take that, thou reverend snarler!' As swift as the darting lightning he dashed a flood of

sparkling Malmsey full in the prelate's face.

I took occasion of the general confusion to fly this disgraceful scene, and retire to an adjoining closet. Anxious to see the contents of the letter, I tore the seal, and read these words:

'If the Earl of Cornwall wishes again to behold his friend of Lancaster, let him repair, on the receipt of this, to Verrel's cottage.'

I perused it over and again, in a kind of torpid astonishment; but summoning resolution to quit the room, I made towards the spot, where I figured to myself Montford had fallen again into some dangerous predicament. On the point of springing down the great staircase, which I had ascended on my entering the Castle with the Earl, sud-

denly a form flitted before me, and, coming behind, laid hold on, and held me by the mantle. Alarmed and offended, I shook off the feeble grasp, and turned to see from what hand it had proceeded. By the reflection of a lamp hanging from the great dome, I recognized Brownlow, the Earl's confidential servant, beseeching me, by supplicating gestures, not to proceed, but to accompany him to the armory. I was convinced this man was honest; therefore, relying on my compliance with his request fully recompensing a moment's delay, and depending on his having intelligence to communicate concerning Lancaster, I acquiesced, and silently followed him to the chamber. He opened and shut the door with equal caution; then, having apologized in a low and fearful voice for his abruptness of introduction—'My Lord,' said he, 'I have been watching for you long at the saloon door; my

motive was to prevent your descending the great marble staircase. Excuse me satisfying the curiosity I have raised, and let me beg of you to pass immediately by this private avenue to the garden. My son Vincent attends you with horses at Verrel's cottage. Do not delay; but be swift to leave the country: and when the royal visitors have quitted the palace, I will join you at Kenilworth Castle, where my Lord informs me the Earl of Lancaster will repair: there I will unfold to you a scene, the atrocity of which——' He was proceeding, when a loud rushing noise, and, a minute after, a deep groan, interrupted him. He started wildly; then waving his hand, as if directing me to be gone, flew from the chamber. I as quick leaped down the small flight of steps, to which he pointed, and in an instant found myself in the garden. The moon shone bright, and directed me

forward. Anxious to unravel the fate of Montford, I was making towards the fourth habitation, which the Earl had described to be Verrel's, when Lancaster, putting aside the thick foliage of an eglantine that hung over the door of a cottage adjoining the palace garden, of peculiar beauty and neatness, loudly called me by my name. My first reflection, after being assured of his safety, was to express surprise at his acting so contrary to the worthy Earl's advice, by flying to the very cottage he had so strictly and solemnly warned us against. 'My scrupulous wary Gaveston,' replied Montford, 'condemn me not until you see the owner of this dwelling.' At Henry's desire, I followed him towards the rustic mansion and its demesnes, which displayed all the wildness of nature, softened by the judicious elegance of art, and was met at the door by Stratton. He bowed, and, with

pleasing cordiality, invited me in. A crowd of vague conjectures occupied my mind, and prevented me from paying that attention to our host's polite and engaging frankness of hospitality which was due. Why should Winchester so pointedly enjoin us to shun this dwelling, adding that we might repent it? What purpose could D-Spencer have in pursuing a conduct which I knew to be wholly incompatible with his retrograde nature? Why did he voluntarily relinquish Clenville, that which to obtain he had made use of the most glaring and flagrant act of injustice? What dark fatality couched under the mysterious words of the letter brought me at the banquet? In fine, how was I to account for Brownlow's conduct? I was divided on the propriety of shewing the paper to Lancaster; it might be a false alarm, and without being radically of any material service, would only disturb his

present tranquillity, and prevent him from enjoying the conversation of Stratton, with whom, as he himself told me, he had been in high dispute on the merits of Virgil. On the table lay the Georgics. Oh! how I envied Henry his conference with this man! and ardently wished him to accept the invitation given by Montford The reverence and esteem he had, at the first interview, conceived for his host, seemed to be much increased by this second meeting; and he pressed him with such warmth and earnestness to visit Kenilworth, that Stratton no longer objected, but promised, within a month, to pay his respects at the Castle.

My two friends now resumed their discourse on Lancaster's favourite author; and I, declining to enter the field of literature, took a seat near the window, under pretext of marking the

progress of the coming day: for though the heavens were illuminated by the resplendence of a radiant moon, we could not venture on our journey until dawn, on account of the intricacies of the road. 'Ah!' thought I, as I looked at Montford, 'how inconstant, how volatile is man! He that now sits before me, and converses with the easy negligence and animated gaiety of perfect innocence, but a few hours back committed murder, and stood the image of inconsolable sorrow; every sense clouded in grief, and groaning as if his soul would evaporate at every heart-wounding sigh!' But Lancaster's mind was of a peculiar cast: he was ever in the extreme; he did not glide through life; but, even in the minutest affairs, was elevated or depressed by accidents which others would have passed by unregarded.

The moon had now sunk; her starry train faded away; and the east became

enlightened. I was unconscious of Stratton's having left the room until he entered, followed by young Vincent, both loaded with refreshments, which they spread on a large oak table. The boy then withdrew, and we were summoned by our host to partake of the rural repast; it consisted of a variety of the choicest fresh-culled fruits, yet moistened with the morning dew; two bowls of cream, an urn of new milk, and a honey-comb. Never did the costly table, loaded with the richest viands, appear half so refreshing or delicious. I enquired whether they were the produce of his garden? 'Yes,' replied he, 'I suffer no intervening hand between me and nature; I plant, the sun ripens, and I gather. Though man may not chuse to mix in the world, he should not live solely for himself; those flocks of various animals you see yonder penned, are my charge; I dispose of them at certain

motive was to prevent your descending the great marble staircase. Excuse me satisfying the curiosity I have raised, and let me beg of you to pass immediately by this private avenue to the garden. My son Vincent attends you with horses at Verrel's cottage. Do not delay; but be swift to leave the country: and when the royal visitors have quitted the palace, I will join you at Kenilworth Castle, where my Lord informs me the Earl of Lancaster will repair: there I will unfold to you a scene, the atrocity of which——' He was proceeding, when a loud rushing noise, and, a minute after, a deep groan, interrupted him. He started wildly; then waving his hand, as if directing me to be gone, flew from the chamber. I as quick leaped down the small flight of steps, to which he pointed, and in an instant found myself in the garden. The moon shone bright, and directed me

forward. Anxious to unravel the fate of Montford, I was making towards the fourth habitation, which the Earl had described to be Verrel's, when Lancaster, putting aside the thick foliage of an eglantine that hung over the door of a cottage adjoining the palace garden, of peculiar beauty and neatness, loudly called me by my name. My first reflection, after being assured of his safety, was to express surprise at his acting so contrary to the worthy Earl's advice, by flying to the very cottage he had so strictly and solemnly warned us against. 'My scrupulous wary Gaveston,' replied Montford, 'condemn me not until you see the owner of this dwelling.' At Henry's desire, I followed him towards the rustic mansion and its demesnes, which displayed all the wildness of nature, softened by the judicious elegance of art, and was met at the door by Stratton. He bowed, and, with

pleasing cordiality, invited me in. A crowd of vague conjectures occupied my mind, and prevented me from paying that attention to our host's polite and engaging frankness of hospitality which was due. Why should Winchester so pointedly enjoin us to shun this dwelling, adding that we might repent it? What purpose could D-Spencer have in pursuing a conduct which I knew to be wholly incompatible with his retrograde nature? Why did he voluntarily relinquish Clenville, that which to obtain he had made use of the most glaring and flagrant act of injustice? What dark fatality couched under the mysterious words of the letter brought me at the banquet? In fine, how was I to account for Brownlow's conduct? I was divided on the propriety of shewing the paper to Lancaster; it might be a false alarm, and without being radically of any material service, would only disturb his

present tranquillity, and prevent him from enjoying the conversation of Stratton, with whom, as he himself told me, he had been in high dispute on the merits of Virgil. On the table lay the Georgics. Oh! how I envied Henry his conference with this man! and ardently wished him to accept the invitation given by Montford The reverence and esteem he had, at the first interview, conceived for his host, seemed to be much increased by this second meeting; and he pressed him with such warmth and earnestness to visit Kenilworth, that Stratton no longer objected, but promised, within a month, to pay his respects at the Castle.

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me. Now here,' turning to the object of his wonder, 'here you have the lineaments all rounded as if into life; the beauties of this performance may be judged by the blind, therefore sculpture rises superior to pencil sketches; a painter may draw from fancy, but I should never conceit that he could take off the human face with such precision as to be recognized by even an interested spectator.' 'This way,' said I, smiling with exultation, and pointing to the third portrait, 'look at that group.' He did so, and started back with strong symptoms of amazement and pleasure. 'How!' exclaimed he, enraptured, 'Stratton!—Cornwall!—Maltravers!—myself!—Admirable! These arts are surely more than human.' 'Would I were your pupil,' said I! 'Pardon me, but have you no family?' 'None but a boy,' replied Stratton, 'in whom my joys are centered.' 'Does he reside with you,'

demanded Montford? 'Not at present,' returned he, 'children are fond of associating with those of their own age, and I, however reluctantly, complied with his humour for a month or two, by suffering him to join his young companions. The allotted time is expired this day, and I expect his return every hour. This is the season for recreation, and it is inhuman to debar youth from what they never can enjoy when once entangled in the perplexing intricacies of worldly affairs.' Upon my asking for what path in life he designed him, and whether he meant to send him to any of the public seminaries? 'No,' he replied; 'from his birth he has been under my care, and, with the permission of the Almighty, I will never consign him to the direction of venal pedants, who, generally speaking, warp the expanding mind; instill pride, prejudice, and folly; contract the benevolent heart; and to teach a few superficial accom-

plishments, eradicate what portion the pupil may possess of every exalted sentiment that enriches the human breast. These pictures represent the most interesting passages of my life; excuse me if I am not more explicit. I am now shadowing the face of my son; will it please you to step this way; I usually study beneath this roof; the honoured shades of those personages inspire me with perseverance in my melancholy yet pleasing occupations. The subject of this trifle I am about to shew you,' continued he, 'is taken (as indeed they are all) from an incident which actually happened. I was sitting with my son in the flower garden about three months ago, when we were suddenly alarmed by a rushing noise immediately over our heads; he looked up and beheld a kite in the act of darting on his favourite tame dove; it flew, and nestled in the child's bosom for protection: having consigned his innocent refugee to

me, he seized a sling, and fixing a stone, laid the airy tyrant breathless at his feet. This action I have attempted to delineate; when finished it will compleat the set of twelve, and be my choicest piece, for I think I have been more happy in the likeness of my boy than I have in the rest, which were all traced from remembrance.' 'Where did you study,' asked Montford? 'You have travelled?' 'Over most part of Europe,' returned he, untying the screen that covered the work; 'but my studies of these sciences were principally confined to Italy and Flanders. Behold my little hero!' Thus saying, he withdrew the curtain, and displayed the act of prowess. Blessed of Heaven! had it discovered a Medusa's head, instead of a Cherub's face, the effect the sight had on us both, but particularly on Lancaster, could not have been more terrific or appalling. We beheld the perfect counterpart of the murdered

Carrol! What a moment! Here was a subject for Stratton's pencil! Yet, when recollection returned, it occurred to me that no certainty was to be gathered from this perhaps casual circumstance; the dresses were different, but then three months had elapsed since this event. To put all beyond a doubt, as well as at once to know the dismal truth, I addressed Stratton, who, amazed at the emotion the picture had caused, stood as beseeching an explanation. I asked the name of his son, and where he was at present? The answer caused my very blood to freeze. Montford, by giving way to the peevish impetuosity of the moment, had robbed this fair model of all good of his darling child.

This dumb scene was interrupted by the appearance of young Vincent, who informed Stratton that Hubert, the Earl of Winchester's physician, awaited

e alcove, near the garden gate,
ous of speaking to him. My throb-
heart foreboded the motive of this
ing, and anticipated the pangs
were preparing to wring the breast
is ill-fated parent. The secret of
Earl's enjoining us to avoid Strat-
cottage was now developed. Oh,
chester, thought I, would you had
less reserved! But wherefore P
tton could not have been kept in
rance as to the fate of his son; and
it not been to answer some good
pose, this interview would never
taken place. Vincent, though
med at our appearance, intreated
ith respectful zeal to quicken our
rture; he dreaded, he said, that
d Lancaster's flight was discovered,
through the whole of the past night
utmost riot and disorder had pre-
ed at the Castle. The distress we
ld at any other time have experi-
ed at this intelligence was totally

absorbed in that we felt at the thoughts of what were now the agonizing reflections of our unfortunate host. I ordered Vincent to retire, and followed Lancaster, who entered a small recess that was separated from the temple by a sweep of tapestry; he threw himself on a matted bench, and I, resolved to wait Stratton's return, made up to the trunk of a tree, which being cut and planed, served for a table, and there sat, patiently resigned to the coming storm.

CHAP X.

THE WHEAT STACKS.

WHOLLY occupied by the conideration of our future views, I did not miss Lancaster until, casting my eyes at the window, I saw him outside the building, stretched on the ground, under an ash tree. I rose to join him; but started back, shuddering as if a spectre had thwarted my view, when I distinguished, through the opposite lattice, Stratton, advancing towards the temple, with the shrouded corpse of Carrol in his arms. He ascended the steps, and stopped at the entrace, as if to see whether his holy sanctuary was still polluted by Lancaster's ensanguined presence. He advanced to the statue, laid his stiffened burden on the pedestal,

then folding his hands over his face, dropt on one knee, and wept—he wept aloud!

'Blessed and beloved shade!' said he, after a long pause, and addressing the princely figure, 'receive this blighted flower—the last of thy persecuted race will soon rejoin him!' Then, as if some painful recollection came across his mind, he added, 'last!—Oh, that I were the last!' Again he relapsed into a state of inertitude, again he apostrophized the spirit of his son. And now he prayed, beseeching the Almighty to strengthen his soul, and inspire him with the magnanimity of——His voice sunk, and though I ardently wished it, I heard not the name of the warrior, for such was the personage I conjectured he alluded to, by fixing his eyes on the statue during his address. Presently after he quitted the temple, leaving the corpse extended on the base.

My curiosity partly satisfied, I felt shame at having, to obtain that satisfaction, intruded upon the privacy of a man, who, imagining he was alone, unguardedly uttered what he might perhaps have desired to lock for ever in his breast. The sentence which escaped him, 'of thy persecuted race,' confirmed me in the supposition I had nourished since the period he had so nobly commemorated, that he was far above the common horde, if not by birth, at least by education.

Ruminating on the best possible means to extricate my friend and self from the perplexing calamities in which every step but the deeper involved us, I quitted the building to seek Lancaster, supposing, to disperse, or rather to indulge the gloominess of his faculties, he had strayed through the grove: thither I repaired, but he was not there. Ever watchful and vigilant

over his safety, I traversed the fields and made towards the garden: here I was met by Vincent, who, in haste and perturbation, beseeched me to fly o the house, that my exertions might save Lord Lancaster from his rash attempts, he having twice essayed to commit suicide, the manual force of Stratton alone preventing it. Darting on, I burst into the room, directed by the sound of Stratton's voice; they were seated together, the one speechless, the other engaged in the force of argument. Greatly as I before appreciated the merits of this villager, my narrow comprehension could not have imagined it was compatible with the susceptibility of human nature to even attempt at soaring to this height of excellence, much less arrive at it,—within one fleeting hour, a parent to be pronounced fatherless!—told that his only child was dead, a doubt of whose safety never once obtruded itself,—instead of

beholding the generous life-inspiring youth, with eyes darting filial love, and cheeks glowing with health and rapture, flying to embrace him after absence,—to receive a cold bloodless corpse, to press it in his arms—reflect on his blasted hopes, then to seek, preserve, console, and forgive the murderer!

Lancaster starting up, reddened at sight of me; but Stratton seating me by him, informed me, with a sigh, that though he was no longer a father he was still a man; that however fond of his son, his affection was circumscribed by the bounds of reason; he never considered children in the light parents generally did, but regarded them as a charge intrusted by the Almighty, who sent them into the world at his will, and recalled them at his pleasure; provided the parent could not accuse himself of neglect, whether they were bereft of life by disease, accident, or vio-

lence, was very immaterial, though, by a combination of various circumstances, the latter not only served to carry on the great work of nature, but might, at the same time, be the means of punishing those who had on other occasions deservedly fallen under the chastening rod.

Such was the substance of our conference, for I circumstantially related to him the particulars attending the child's death, having taken the moment of Lancaster's retiring into an adjoining apartment. Stratton's abstracted looks and tremulous voice at first contradicted the tenets he adduced, and betrayed every symptom of his inward anguish: but towards the close, he seemed to have even inspired himself with fortitude, and reasoned with such perspicuity and strength of argument, that an indifferent spectator would have concluded he was endeavouring

to exculpate himself from a murderous charge; yet all the parent again rising within him, again he mourned, again he sighed, again he wept!

Words I had none to offer, nor stirred he till arouzed by the sudden appearance of young Vincent, who, wild and breathless with unrestrained emotions of joy and exultation, ran in, exclaiming, 'D'Spencer! D'Spencer is dead!' Lancaster, at the same moment, entered by the opposite door, and banishing all painful ideas to welcome the ecstacy this transporting intelligence imparted, quickly interrogated Vincent as to the truth of his information. The inflamed youth, fired by the enthusiastic ardour of patriotism, replied, that the tidings of England's detested enslaver having finished his career last night, had by this reached the utmost verge of the island, that the whole country was rising in arms,

and that his Highness had departed in haste for London.

Representing to my imagination the despair of the worthy Earl, D'Spencer's father, (for great as may be the foibles or even vices of their offspring, nature wrings the parental heart with afflicting pangs, when calamity assails their dearer self) I resolved instantly on returning to the Castle, in hopes, in some measure, to mitigate the sorrows of a man whom I honoured and respected. This design was no sooner formed, and on the point of being put in execution, than it was frustrated, by the youth's acquainting us, after many previous expressions of concern for his unpardonable thoughtlessness in not having communicated it sooner, that the King, ere his departure from Winchester Castle, had declared, that Lord Lancaster's escaping at such a critical juncture gave rise

to suspicions that his enemy, D'Spencer's volent death was not unknown to him; but, even admitting he was not accessary to this crime, his absconding confirmed the charge of guilt before attached to him, and thereby he should be considered 'a public violator of all peace and order.' Viewed in that light, his lands, possessions, and effects were confiscated to the Crown; himself proscribed as a lawless traitor; and finally, that whomsoever caused his apprehension and commitment should be rewarded with one thousand marks.

As when a whelming torrent, checked in its progress by force superior, having weakened the impeding barrier by incessant lavings, at length rushes forward with foaming violence, irresistibly sweeping to destruction all that opposes the fury of its course, so did Lancaster's unconquerable spirit now

burst forth, denouncing vengeance on his royal oppressor.

Stratton having calmly viewed the workings of phrenzy, left the room, motioning to Vincent, who, frightened at Montford's vehemence, and regarding his wrathful expressions as the ravings of a madman, hastily obeyed. Never, since my first acquaintance with my friend, had I beheld him raised to such a pitch of exasperation; yet, confiding in the oft-tried ascendancy I alone held over him, I hazarded an attempt to appease the storm of turbulent passions, raised by an event he might have foreseen would be the consequence of his flight coming to the knowledge of Edward. But the springs of reason, wound rudely by the ungentle hand of grief, occasioned by a succession of disappointments, had snapt; he was no longer the generous Mont-

ford, ever rash, ever irritable, yet always open to conviction,—but an ireful frenetic. I pleaded to be heard, and plucked the robe away in which he had muffled his face; but words had not depicted his mental emotions with half the truth his countenance now did, it was pale, convulsed, of a deadly hue, and those eyes, ever beaming life and spirit, now blood-shot, glared like comets scorching my feebler sight.

Stratton ere long returned, saying he had been reconnoitring in the neighbourhood, and, as Vincent had informed us, he had indeed discovered sparks of disaffection kindling among the peasantry, which might, in the course of a few days, be either totally extinguished, or spread into a flame, perhaps never to be quenched. Taking every thing into consideration, he earnestly advised Lancaster to remain concealed at his cottage, until it was known

what effect the rumour of D'Spencer's death would produce throughout the kingdom. Stratton was proceeding to state the expediency of this measure, reasoning on the policy of temporizing with circumstances, and promising to aid and succour him in all extremities, when Montford, not even slightly acknowledging this considerate and humane offer, avowed his fixt determination to set off immediately to Kenilworth, where his mother then resided, and if the emissaries of the Crown dared challenge the Castle, according to the order for its confiscation amongst the rest of his estates, that he would contest their power by force of arms. This resolution taken, I was convinced not all the rhetoric of the world could dissuade him from it; and therefore as Montford's proxy, I returned thanks to Stratton for his concern, but requested him no longer to throw any impediment in the way of our depar-

ture. He acquiesced, and going to a press took from thence two large brown wrapping cloaks and slouched hats, such as are worn by the peasantry. He warmly urged me to prevail on Montford to throw them on, or he feared, from his dress, accoutrements, and agitated appearance, that he might be recognized, and perhaps, stopt ere he reached Kenilworth. Not venturing to give this as the cause for the propriety of equipping himself, I seized the advantage of a heavy shower that had long been threatened by a lowering sky, and gave as the ostensible reason why he should accept of Stratton's offer, the warmth and shelter the mantles would afford from the rain. Scarce conscious what he did, he suffered me to throw it over him, and Stratton having fastened the belt, drew the hat over his eyes so as to shade his face, saying, 'I fear you will be wet, the way is tedious, but Vincent shall be your

guide, and the horses are swift. May Heaven be your guard!' This anxiety for his safety shot a momentary ray of reflection through Montford's brain, and softened a heart I before dreaded was callous to all feeling. He looked at Stratton, the childless Stratton, and, whilst the tear of gratitude, sensibility, and remorse, trembled in his eye, he exclaimed, 'the blessing of that Heaven be also upon you!' The watery globule fell from its source on the hand he pressed; then darting to the door, he vaulted on his horse, and rode on. Apprehensive of suffering him to proceed a step without me, I was forced hastily to bid Stratton farewell, leaving all I had formed in my mind unsaid. What I desired most, was to learn particulars relative to D'Spencer's death. These, from Stratton's vicinity to the Castle, he might have procured me. Upon further consideration, I reflected, that Vincent, whose father, Brownlow, re-

sided with Lord Winchester, could, in all likelihood, seek the truth on his return, and communicate to me the particulars he might hear. This the youth assented to, and I joined Lancaster, who had rode a considerable way before us.

'What wonderous stroke of Providence,' thought I, 'has cut D'Spencer off? Could it have proceeded from the dispute between him and the prelate of Hereford? The contest was at a dangerous height when I quitted the saloon: the Bishop, whilst I was present, raised his hand against him, and my interposition alone preserved the wanton aggressor from a blow that might have proved fatal. Perhaps a second was aimed, and fulfilled its mission. But if so, why was Lancaster implicated by the King in a crime occasioned by the intemperance of the moment in another?' Many and va-

rious were my conjectures; but certain was I that universal joy would attend the intimation of D'Spencer's decease. The people, drove to the verge of penury and wretchedness by their lordly oppressor, who, not content with heaping misery on his own appropriate vassals, showered curses over all the land, passive and submissive during his dictatorship, would now, methought, unanimously rise, proclaim their rights, their privileges, and enslave the enslavers. Discontent, coeval with Edward's accession, would now burst forth in a flame of opposition, and probably consume, in its raging course, the very vitals of monarchy.

Ere we reached Abingdon, shouts and acclamations assailed our ears. As we were obliged to pass through the town, I consulted with Vincent on the best method to avoid suspicion, and escape without molestation. I myself

was for pacing our horses gently through the main street with affected unconcern and indifference; but the youth, with more forethought and prudence, advised us both to dismount and walk, saying, that he would lead the horses past the town, and, if questioned, would fabricate some plausible story to delude the interrogators. Scarce had Vincent finished speaking, than we were suddenly surrounded by a body of peasants, who, having from afar witnessed our stoppage, and drawing near, seemingly in conference previously to entering Abingdon, suspecting we were not what we wished to appear, had stolen, under umbrage of a thick coppice, to the spot where we stood debating, and thus surprised us unawares. With threatening gestures and loud voices, both equally indispensable, they peremptorily demanded who we were? from whence we came? and whither we were going? I had

foreseen this, and was happily prepared with a wily tale; which I was about to address, with all due obsequiousness, to the authoritative Captain of the ringleaders, when, to my utter astonishment, and real mortification at what I considered but fool-hardiness, Montford, flinging off his cloak and hat, cried, in a tone scarcely human, 'I am the Earl of Lancaster, the foe to tyranny, the people's friend; ready to support their struggles for liberty, ready to tear the bands of slavery!' This apostrophe, considered by his credulous hearers as the brilliant effusion of a patriotic mind, but, in truth, only a false flash emitted from an embittered soul, was received with unbounded applause. Multitudes of the insurgents flocked from every quarter; hats thrown in the air darkened the sun; voices, in shouts and cries, welcomed their illustrious champion; every man strove to press forward, and

the whole corps led him in triumph to the town. Having no emulation to share his honours, I silently followed, attended by Vincent, whom it was with the utmost difficulty, by force of persuasion, I could restrain from joining the throng in voice and person. The enthusiastic people, worshipping their princely hero, conducted him to the extremity of the town, designing, no doubt, to lodge him in the Bishop's palace, who, on the first intelligence of the insurrection, had fled from his flock, to put himself under the protection of the nation's pastor: but in their way thither, they either purposely or by chance passed a large field, where were raised huge stacks of wheat, the sight of which alone was sufficient to inspire every heart with emotions of grateful piety towards Heaven. The leader, a man of middle age, of respectable appearance, and, by Vincent's account, famed for pos-

sessing no despicable powers of elocution, commanded the whole body to halt: they obeyed, and silence ensued. He climbed a waggon near, so as to elevate himself above his auditors, that he might be heard by the farthest circle: and then addressing Lancaster, who alone was on horseback, began—

'A scarcity of grain pervades the kingdom; yet behold the property of a private individual, stored up for the express purpose of either transporting it to the Continent or reserving it to raise the prices at the mart. Earl Mortimer is the owner of yon magazines: but bethink you, my Lord, in justice, should the man that cultivates the earth perish, surrounded by the produce of his industry? From the exalted rank you hold, it may be presumed you are totally unacquainted with the necessities of the poorer classes: your luxurious table has been

ever loaded with superfluous excess; and you imagine Plenty reigns in the hovel. It did—but Want hath dethroned her. Pluck the mask from your eyes—forget your rank for one sorry moment—and if you are, as you have professed yourself, the friend of the poor, deign to learn the real state of the country: your knowledge of the existence of your fellow-subjects is indeed circumscribed.

'That rapacious foe—enemy to humanity, peace, and every virtue—D'Spencer—is no more! so report says. Ere he who transformed the golden sceptre into a rod of iron is cold in his grave, the Monarch, weary of the cares of ruling, may again deliver up the liberties of his subjects to the dominion of a third arbitrary courtier. This they should, ere too late, endeavour to prevent. Acknowledge Edward; but own no fawning crafty fa-

vourite for Sovereign. Why should the wish to gratify the cravings of ambition be placed in competition with the happiness of thousands? If the King cannot sacrifice to them an artful parasite, who, like a gormandizing locust, devours their substance, why should they retain their oath of allegiance to him, at the expence of their dearest rights? The towering Gaveston is dead; the base D'Spencer is gone, and now that splendid tyrant Mortimer raises his head from the bosom of obscurity to lord over their lives and possessions. The marts, by their enormous price, forbid the poor's approach: they starve, yet suffer themselves to be tantalized by these lofty bullies, which, though bounteous Nature freely gives, lowers defiance, saying, "I am beyond your reach."

He ceased—but what a peal of thundering applause ensued! The very

concave of Heaven re-echoed with shouts that stunned the vociferators. Now the sounds gradually decreased to a gentle murmur; again a burst of clamorous exultation rent the air, and again it died away. Silence restored, a youth, who had taken the last words of the orator literally, exclaimed—'But a vain boast that!'—and leaping over the fence that inclosed the stacks, cried—'Here, my countrymen! help yourselves—don't be afraid. Beshrew your hearts! you don't suppose this is wheat to its owner, and night-shade to you? Pluck, and bear away.' With agile swiftness the hardy stripling climbed to the summit of the highest stack, and threw down armsful of wheat to the people below, who, rouzed to an exalted pitch of enthusiastic rage, by the adventurous youth's example, their leader's inflammatory harangue, the sight of their wives and children, and the animating princely Lancaster, fell

like geneous lions on the mighty piles, which, in a few minutes, vanished like a vision.

The numberless throngs that had prevented my coming up with Lancaster during this phillipic, replete with the fallacious argument of self-delusion, now dispersed, to carry their several captures to their respective habitations. I earnestly intreated Montford to seize the opportunity of escaping from the place before the multitude returned, who would overburthen him with proofs of reverence and gratitude, from which the orator himself had thought proper to decamp. To strengthen my arguments, I represented to Lancaster, that this transaction would soon reach the Court, an armed force would probably be sent against him, and all intercourse cut off before we could reach Kenilworth, where it would now be absolutely re-

quisite to make a most intrepid resistance. Montford made me no answer; but addressing the youth, whose name we afterwards understood was Eustace de Erickblane, a native of Sweden, and who alone kept the field, desired him to seek the valorous leader, and acquaint him with his wish to see him at Kenilworth. The young man bowed obeisance; and Montford, unbuckling a belt, enriched with brilliants, which he usually wore over his shoulder, presented it to him, as a reward for the zeal and courage he had manifested that day. Without waiting for the youth's acknowledgments, or heeding my advice to resume the cloak Vincent tendered him, he gallopped off, and I was obliged to follow, though vexed at his wilfulness and contumacy. Once more left to my reflections, I contemplated the prospect before us—it was stained with many a streak of crimson: Lancaster had thrown off

allegiance; the people's struggles for freedom was but a faint effort; the King was powerful in resources, weak in mind; the Queen implacable where Mortimer met with indignity; and Mortimer himself irascible as his Royal Mistress. How severely, then, did I condemn this last intemperate act of Montford's, that, without being of service to others, might bring destruction to himself! Life is but a series of endeavour, a chain of suspence, the vestibule to the temple of Security, the door of which is never opened to us.

CHAP. XI.

KENILWORTH CASTLE.

WE arrived at Kenilworth before sun set; and here, even at the portal, misfortune stood ready to receive us. To explain this I must trespass on your patience, and relate an incident which, though it happened immediately after the birth of Montford, consequently many years back, produced the tumult and disorder that now prevailed at Kenilworth. The Countess of Lancaster, Henry's mother, resided, at the above-mentioned period, with her Lord at Canford, a domain in Dorsetshire, from whence, at an evil hour, during the Earl's absence, she was forcibly borne by a deformed dwarf, Richard St. Martin, who, with unparalleled audacity,

had the presumption to claim her as his betrothed wife, together with the earldoms of Lincoln and Somerset in her right. This insolent, and indeed ludicrous demand, being brought before a court entitled Equity, composed of a venal set of hirelings, the illustrious female, to the wonder and undissembled indignation of the whole kingdom, was adjudged the property of the base-born slave; but her noble consort, by immediate and spirited threats and remonstrance to Edward, obtained a revocation of the sentence, and recovered her. True, he had her immaculate person restored to his widowed arms; but that feminine grace and angelic softness before so peculiarly attached to her character, were gone for ever; she was no longer the meek and gentle matron, the Court's brightest ornament for loveliness of disposition, the radiant luminary that diffused the mild rays of harmony and captivating sweet-

ness around her, but a haughty, arrogant, resentful dame, who, stung by the opprobrious injustice offered her by the Queen (for this indign act was Isabel's contrivance, in return for some foolish pique given at a royal festival) nourished in her breast the self-consuming passion of revenge, until some favourable opportunity might offer to vent it in a full torrent of invective against her imperious mistress. This ill-starred day was the appointed period. A few hours before we arrived an event occurred which at once banished all forbearance and overwhelmed the Lancasters in ruin irretrievable. Her Highness, stimulated by Mortimer, who detested Montford, and the malignity of her own vindictive nature, in the hope of widening the breach between Edward and my friend (but as yet ignorant of the order for confiscation of Lancaster's possessions), rested, on her way to Oxford, at Kenilworth,

attended by a numerous suite, and Mortimer, with his pompous gold-bedecked retinue, to demand accommodations for themselves and equipage until the coming morn; for, though she was well aware how the Countess's mind stood towards her, yet her contemptible sparing soul knew no greater happiness than the vanity of demonstrating that though not loved she was feared, and therefore, with the mean insignificance of contracted sentiments, she resolved to exert that authority her station invested her with, and insult, by disrespecting the laws of property, the presence of a female, whom, if she had had a spark of delicacy or compunction, she would rather have avoided. But it is a remark frequently made, that women, though most tender in body and intellect, yet in cruelty surpass men, and are far more prone to wound each other's mental feelings.

The Queen's Esquire having received his commission, advanced before the group, and desired the gates of Kenilworth to be opened, and apartments prepared for her Highness and attendants, who intended to sojourn until the morning. The checked passion that had so long enflamed the proud heart of the injured lady against her Sovereign was now let loose, nor would she suffer reason to suppress it, though herself and hundreds might perish in the blaze. Her answer to the Queen, sent by a needy vassal or under-groom (in this mark the woman), briefly comprehended, that the person of her son, the Lord of Kenilworth, and Earl of Lancaster, her Highness well knew was imprisoned, and that as she could not, in respect to him, admit strangers without his knowledge and concurrence, she must be necessarily deprived of the honour of so noble and illustrious a visitor. This coarse, this un-

looked-for refusal, bearing not even the varnish of civility, the trembling messenger having stammered out, quickly retreated over the bridge, which was instantly drawn up. Isabella confounded, enraged, and blushing at the indign form of her unequivocal meaning, threatened a swift vengeance on the House of Lancaster, and departed.

The poignant sense of the above-mentioned injury offered to his mother, had, from childhood, preyed on Montfords's heart; his father's last injunction charged him to resent it, and his own recent wrongs now steeled him in the determination to chastise the intolerable insolence of the court faction. He eagerly participated with the Countess in the dazzling conquest they had obtained over the crest-fallen Queen, and both exultingly rejoiced at the blessed occasion chance had thus opportunely thrown in their way to mor-

tify her inhuman and savage pride. In the midst of this general renversion of peace and tranquillity, this triumph of choler over every discretionary power, whilst all were preparing to obey Montford, who commanded the Castle immediately to be placed in the best state of defence, I sought and found my sister, the gentle Emma. Terrified at Lady Lancaster's unguarded expressions of anger, the timid maid, unused to any species of violence, had retired until the tempest should be somewhat subsided. Her ingenuous tokens of rapture at thus unexpectedly beholding me, and learning that Lancaster was safe and then in the Castle, shot a faint gleam of pleasure through my soul; but how suddenly was it damped by the reflection of what mischances the next hour might produce! Conformable to the strict rules of propriety, from which my Emma never deviated, she could not be the first to

greet Montford, and consequently declined accompanying me to him; but such was the acute sensibility of her heart, that she had not the address to prevent a soft shade of uneasiness overspreading her countenance at the view of his having been so long in the Castle without expressing a desire to see her. She listened not to the excuses I laid before her in behalf of his neglect, but interrupting me, laughing, remarked I was as great a sinner myself, and stood full more in need of apology than Montford. Emma then acquainted me, unasked, that Blanche had left her some time back to spend an hour in her favourite grotto in the wilderness, having herself been debarred her customary exercise on account of a slight cold, adding, that Blanche and Johanna had embellished the alcove with such taste and ingenuity, that I should no longer regret the bower of Hygeia in Clenville park. Regardless of my importunities

against her exposing herself to the damp air, she insisted on my following her to take unawares her pensive companion. We made to the grotto, but no Blanche enlivened the smiling spot ornamented by her hands. 'She is not here,' exclaimed my conductress: 'then we will seek her in another of her loved haunts, the Willow-walk.' To the Willow-walk we went, but it was lonely and deserted. I suggested all was not right, and impatiently enquired of Emma if Blanche was accustomed to wander beyond the Castle grounds?—'Frequently,' replied my sister, 'we often stroll together, with Johanna, about the fields, attended only by Alice.' This assurance, in part, banished my fears; and we were again conversing on indifferent topics, when I was summoned by a domestic to Lancaster. Emma desiring me not to mention her to Montford, returned to her chamber. I found Lancaster on

the ramparts, in the midst of a numerous tribe of servants, tenants, and vassals, disposd in well-regulated bands, consisting of twenty men each; they were receiving their weapons from the hands of the orator, by name Norman O'Connor, and the stripling, Eustace de Erickblane, that had distinguished himself by his dauntles intrepidity at Abingdon. My friend's purpose for sending for me, was to acquaint me that he had, at last, successfully prevailed on his mother to relinquish her generous intention of hazarding her life in support of an action, the perils of which herself had, in part, occasioned, and that an equipage was in readiness to convey the Countess, Johanna, Emma, and Blanche, with the rest of the females, to Porchester. What Montford required of me was, not only to escort them thither, but stay to protect them when arrived. 'If the approaching siege,' added he, 'prove propitious to our

arms, they shall either be recalled to Kenilworth, or I will meet them at Porchester: if the enemy should prosper, I must resign them to Providence.'

On his demanding my consent to this measure, I started the objection, that in all probability the Castle at Porchester was this instant in the power of the delegates of the Crown, so may Leeds, Lewes, Canford, and the Savoy, remarked I; or if otherwise, you cannot insure an asylum at places liable to immediate seizure. He agreed to the truth of what I advanced, and was relapsing into a needless fit of vehemence against the dissseisor and author of these accumulated distresses, when I timely prevented it by producing the deed whereby D'Spencer, before his death, had made over to me my domain of Clenville. This was not a moment for explanation, I hastily informed him that I would take some further oppor-

tunity to reveal what had passed between D'Spencer and myself, and left him to join the Countess and her train. A slight machine, admirably contrived with planks, silk, and the skin of the Lynx and Panther, by several artificers, under the direction of Norman, capable of holding four or six persons, was now produced, and thought sufficiently strong and commodious to convey, by means of horses, the Countess and the ladies, with their attendants, to Porchester. I approved of this device, as it would not only be of the utmost service in preserving them from the rain, that poured in torrents, but screen their forms from the rude gaze of the inhabitants of those towns and villages that the procession would pass through. Norman kindly expressed his sorrow that the residue of the females must be conveyed thither on horseback, as, he said, there was neither time nor materials to form another caravan.

Lancaster, who had followed me, no sooner discerned the fair group than running his eyes quick from face to face, he rested them on Emma, who, meeting his inquiring glance, blushed and bowed her head. Montford was moving towards her, when a voice, nearly approaching to a scream, transfixed him to the spot: 'The Lady Blanche is missing!' exclaimed a young female, rushing through the croud, and falling at the Countess's feet—'your daughter is gone!' A scene of conjectures, lamentations, useless questions, and unsatisfactory replies, took place among those interested in the fate of the lost treasure, but all their vain expressions of fear and dolour were a perfect calm, when compared to what passed in my breast at this fatal intelligence. How severely I censured that apathy which made me neglect persevering in quest of her the instant I was informed by Emma she often strayed

beyond the Castle grounds, a practice, methought, most injudicious and unqualified. To render my self-accusation more poignant, a new reflection of alarming tendency offered itself to my imagination, and pourtrayed my betrothed in the power of emissaries whom D Spencer before his death might have dispatched to execute the accomplishment of those designs he had some time back detailed in his infamous letter to Guerney. I cautiously communicated my apprehensions to Henry, who appeared struck with the same belief; after a short pause, he turned to a page, and desired him to send Norman thither. Norman, who had been employed in placing the slingers at their post, immediately attended: fully expecting further commands relative to the regulations of the forces over whom he was appointed by Montford Sub-Lieutenant, he was thrown into the utmost confusion and perplexity

at Lancaster's requesting him to single out five of the choicest men, and depart at the moment in search of Blanche. Montford, at first, either did not perceive, or was purposely blind to Norman's change of countenance, at his evident reluctance to undertake the commission; but proceeded to direct him, if he was so happy as to recover the lady, that he should proceed directly to Clenville, and place her under my protection. Such a proposal, on the eve of battle, so stung Norman's martial pride, and damped his dreadless spirit, that he faintly stammered out his readiness to serve Montford with such ill-grace and undissembled vexation at this unexpected treatment, that Lancaster could not but notice it: having drawn him aside, in that conciliating tone and manner which was eminently his when occasion presented itself to call it forth, he gave Norman to understand how far he

would value the man by whose means his sister was saved beyond him that defended a thousand of such fortresses; adding, that if he discontentedly refused attempting this allotted piece of service, he himself must positively decline accepting any other, as his example might encourage a spirit of opposition in his colleagues. This remonstrance, strengthened by Montford's acquainting him that I had consented to escort the Countess to Clenville, effectually chased Norman's depression, and animated his courage; he signified his fidelity and entire obedience, and quitted us, to make choice of the men who were to share with him this fortuitous enterprize.

True, I consented to undertake my appointed employ, yet thou mayest judge that my heart was divided in the eagerness to attempt the rescue of Blanche from destruction, and my de-

sire to stand by my friend in the hour of danger; but on Henry intimating that his mother might view my resigning her to the care of her domestics as a contemptuous slight, I shewed no farther repugnance, but declared my firm intention, when I had placed them in security at Clenville, to return to Kenilworth; for every sacred and beloved tie that had bound us together from childhood, forbad my deserting him at such a juncture. He vainly endeavoured to combat this resolution; and at length, at my earnest entreaty, agreed (should hostilities be commenced) to admit me into the Castle at an appointed time, by a small postern, which led, by a secret passage, to the west battlements.

The ardent wish that Lady Lancaster would oppose my accompanying her, and depute me to succour Blanche, was frustratsd, on her summoning Norman,

and thanking him in the warmest terms for his acquiescence to her son's will, and his readiness to seek her daughter. She presented him with a brilliant from her finger, promising ampler returns should he be the means of restoring her child to her arms. Her tears and pleading voice, annexed to a set of beauteous features, expressive of maternal grief, solicitude, and love, operated miraculously on the hardened nerves of Norman. He knelt, saying, he would find the Lady Blanche, and if not too late, preserve her at the hazard of his life. A few of his followers who had witnessed his former reluctance, by significant and impertinent glances, ascribed this cheerful compliance to the precious rhetorical gem, and the Countess's engagement of future pecuniary rewards. Whether he perceived it, or merely acted from the principles of his nature, I knew not then; but he quickly changed their

scorn to approbation; bending, to kiss her tendered hand, he dexterously slipt the ring back on the despoiled finger, and gently drew away her glove, which he thrust into his bosom, and retired.

Affairs finally adjusted, the Countess took leave of her son with mingled tears, embraces, and prayers for his success and safety, and stepped into the caravan, followed by my Emma, Johanna, and their women. The drawbridge was lowered, and the cavalcade crossed; but as the officers were on the point of raising it, a tremendous shower of arrows, and other missile weapons, with force assailed us, and instantly a large body of soldiers started from the woods around the Castle; they fitted the instrument again to the string, and before we could collect our company and retreat within the portals, another volley poured among us and wounded several. A piercing shriek issued from

the caravan! Dismayed and aghast, I drew back the curtain, and discovered the Countess extended on the flooring. I hastily put aside the weeping women, and raised her in my arms; her head drooped, a fount of blood deluged my breast as I supported her: alas! an arrow had pierced her right temple, and the point appeared through the left. When the gates were closed, with affected sternness I appeased the unavailing cries of the terrified females, and directed them to remove the body of their lady to the interior apartments, and stay by it until they received further orders. They obeyed in silence, but with looks that plainly indicated what they thought of me—their eyes darting abhorrence, proclaimed me most cruel, barbarous, and savage! but I deferred till future times the clearing my humanity to these gentle damsels, and advanced to Johanna; on her bosom my sister (who had providentially

escaped unhurt) had sunk in a deep swoon. I took her to mine, and desiring two or three of the women to follow me, conveyed the senseless innocent to a remote chamber, charging them to use every means to recover her, but not to suffer her to escape from the room.

On my return, I encountered Lancaster, traversing with disordered steps a narrow gloomy passage leading to the Countess's apartments; he had beheld what had passed from an eminence, and had been to view his mother's corse; pale, trembling, and scarce able to walk, he advanced towards me, and, as if this was previously designed by Heaven as a final parting, whilst both could boast of liberty, we raised our eyes, saying, 'when will our cup of woe be filled?' and burst into tears. Thus, like two whining girls, were we sobbing on each other's shoulders,

when this unmanly and useless transport of grief was suddenly checked by the appearance of Norman. He prefaced his tale by communicating his fears that the hostile band which assaulted us, had either slain or corrupted the numerous scouts he had dispatched on the watch; and then informed us that our soldiers descried from a far a considerable armed force. Here Eustace joined us, and added, that on its nearer approach, they distinguished in the van the King, Earl Mortimer, and the Lords of Kent, Arundel, Leicester, and Suffolk.

On Montford's asking whether the peasants, dispatched some time back for provisions, were returned, Norman replied that they were not; and he was apprehensive, from their tedious delay and the celerity of the enemy's approach, they had been intercepted. 'If

so,' added he, 'the fortress cannot hold out three days at the utmost. I have inspected into the state of the magazines, and find there is not sufficient sustenance, with the most rigid economy, for the numbers now introduced into the Castle for its defence.'

This was a most disastrous mortification to Lancaster, who had so long prided himself upon the certainty of humbling his mighty oppressor by the brilliancy of his arms; but where was a reduced, a famished garrison to gather that strength and vigour requisite to oppose a hardy and well disciplined body, animated by the hopes of gain, and invigorated by the exhilarating wines and viands, which a scout informed us Edward had caused to be distributed among his men ere their march, and continued to them during the siege?

All Lancaster had to expect was flight ere the contest commenced, imprisonment if taken, or death should he court it by persevering in hostilities. The two former he recoiled from, and the latter was welcomed as the most honourable resort, which he determined to embrace rather than yield to the former. This unforeseen blast of his hopes was irremediable. Now all the avenues leading from the neighbouring villages to the Castle were blocked up by detachments sent from the main body of the enemy, and in the space of twenty minutes Edward pitched his camp before Kenilworth.

Numberless are the actions you may have witnessed, my friend, yet never a conflict betwixt Prince and subject; but a faint idea can be conceived of the peculiar horror of civil ruptures by those whose knowledge extends not beyond foreign strifes. Oh Discord! thou

hydra-headed monster, sprung from Tartarian depths, why shouldst thou be cherished by man—man, that proudly boasts his appropriate faculty of reasoning, and likeness to the image of the Divinity? Is not the allotted term of human life sufficiently brief for the exercise of our prescribed duties? The lion preys not on the lion, but man, remorseless man, from age to age, from sire to son; spurs on in his execrable career, ever ready to hoist the bloody banner against his species, as if extirpation were part of his creed, and he had sworn eternal enmity to his kind. Thinkest thou the majesty of Heaven delights in the slaughter of his redeemed? What is he that would sink the sloop to commemorate the builder's fame, or gratify his pride in having framed it?

Rest thee here for a while, my friend, and suffer me to shew thee that I pene-

trate the inmost recesses of thy mind; but know my concience is the plummet whereby I fathom thy thoughts. Thou wonderest at my halting in my narrative, to bewail the miseries arising from feuds and dissension, at the very commencement of a battle wherein I stood, next to Lancaster, principal, and that against a Sovereign, a parent, a kind benefactor,—for Edward had been such to me. Whether I remained indebted to the innate beneficence of his disposition, or merely to the caprice of his humour, was a question not to be discussed. True, it was the mutual attachment that existed between his Highness and my father, that first set the Queen and nobles to spin the net of peril to enmesh myself and sister; therefore was he, in some measure, bound to shield us from the lurking traitors; but still he had a right to demand to the utmost extent our affections and reverence. So answer I he

should, had he not shewn by his wanton inhumanity of temper, in many instances, that it was not Gaveston he prized for Gaveston's self, but that his nature could not exist without a partner. Why did he causelessly banish us from our paternal roof, and withdraw his countenance from me, who from childhood considered him as my gracious preserver?—With the genuine ardour of pure tenderness I fed on his very looks, his words; hung by the hour at his knee; never when he retired to rest did I fail paying my wishes that sleep might crown his pillow, or when he rose, to give the greetings of the morn; I ever smiled when he smiled, though, belike, my heart had been breaking the moment before with some peculiar grief; yet I ever sighed when he sighed, although, ere I caught the sympathising moan, transport danced in bounding steps throughout my veins.

Oh Edward! father to my infancy, guardian to my youth, friend in my adolescence, why didst thou suffer a heart that once beat with wild throbbings of pleasure at thy very name, to congeal into distaste by thy rapid passing from extreme fondness to the treating me with contemptuous indifference? Ah! when thou didst sow the seeds of gratitude within me, which I hesitate not saying quickly sprouted into blossoms of fair promise, and would, when the autumn of my youth was come, have ripened into fullness! Why pluck the budding shoots with the hand of contumelious scorn, and by force root them from my breast? Our affections that were once linked close as the disparity of age would permit, how soon they flew apart—distant as pole from pole; easier is it to give life to fleshless bones than re-unite two severed hearts!

I will not vilify myself so far as to advance that I should ever have turned my arms against him to resent a slight that touched myself alone; but when I beheld the dignity and the liberty of my friend insulted, and in danger of total annihilation, then I considered it my duty to regard the King only as an oppressive despot, tyrannizing over a family, among whom, looking at a sure, though far perspective, I reckoned a brother, a parent, and a wife,—for as such I considered Montford, his honoured mother, and my affianced Blanche; add to this, I was then in the spring of manhood, a period when too oft a mist is thrown over Reason's sight, that the passions may have full scope to the enjoyment of that licentious freedom which would otherwise have been checked by the stern restraining eye of sober reflection. Yet think not I would attempt a justification against my better sense; no,

nothing can palliate the reproachful act of my braving Edward in the field. But Providence, all wise and merciful, granted me an opportunity, in some small measure, to erase from the tablets wherein my errors are registered, part of this crime that, upon retrospect, lay so heavy on my mind. I wish not to anticipate the events that blacken the remainder of my relation, but must here remark, least any remaining scruples still serve to sink me in thy regard,—that when my royal Lord, by a dismal and wonderous succession of unforeseen consequences, had fallen into the lowest depths of human wretchedness and woe, I was the chosen by Heaven to meliorate the galling pangs of his unheard of, his most cruel sufferings.

CHAP. XII.

THE PEACE-MAKER.

THRICE the surrender of Kenilworth was demanded in the name of England's King, and thrice Lancaster haughtily dismissed the herald at each successive summons. The last peremptory denial was the signal for the attack to commence on the part of the besiegers. Thrice were the enemy repulsed from the walls, and as oft returned they with redoubled vigour to the assault. Montford and Norman darted from post to post, directed the arms, animated the spirits, and cheered the hearts of all their men. I headed a detachment which Lancaster had placed to guard a postern immediately fronting the enemy, whose main force had

chosen an eminence that, to the detriment of the besieged, fully commanded the internal courts and spaces of the Castle. After a sharp skirmish of four hours, which cost the enemy many a life, they suddenly sounded a retreat, and withdrew to their tents.

The interim we employed in succouring our wounded, and conveying them to the chambers, which the humanity and forethought of Lancaster had ordered to be provided with every necessary and comfort for their reception. Having seen them consigned to the care of the surgeons, we returned to the ramparts, in order to deliberate on what course to pursue in the desperate condition affairs stood. Whilst engaged in the very height of debate a sudden recollection came across me that never before occurred, and now brought most acute sensations of remorse: this was my unpardonable neglect in not

having, according to the urgent request of Stratton, and pursuant to the dictates of honour and thankfulness, restored young Vincent to his father. I had accepted the youth's service of attending us to Kenilworth, and, instead of acknowledging it, by sending him back to either Stratton or Brownlow, I had delayed his departure until my wish was vain—thereby I considered myself guilty of a most ignoble breach of faith. All the passes leading from the Castle were now blocked up; he might be wounded, he might be killed in the conflict. Famine would, ere long, reign absolute within the walls, without stood Death and Imprisonment. And such was the return Montford and myself made to those who had exerted every faculty to serve us. The young man himself supposing, as I conjecture, that I intended to dismiss him when freed from the first paying of my duties to the Countess and the ladies, carefully

concealed himself from my sight, on hearing from the domestics the probability of an engagement between Kenilworth and the court party, for he was a stripling of most undaunted and heroic spirit, and prized the wielding of a javelin to the handling of a sheep-crook. I hinted my fears for the youth's safety, and sorrow for having unintentionally, though through negligence, endangered his life, to Lancaster; but he, in the warmth of discussion with Norman, could scarce attend to what I said; and when he did vouchsafe to hear me, the only reply he made was, 'O, confine him in the guard-room.' Stung to the quick at this most ungenerous shew of apathy in what so nearly concerned *Lim* whose name should have forced attention if not imparted horror, I turned away with design to enquire where I might find Vincent, resolving to guard him with my life, and not suffer him to leave me,

ardently hoping that he might be covered with an ægis, that Fortune would prove propitious to my prayers, and he should yet unhurt be restored to his father. On learning that he, Eustace, and several youths were seen in the stone gallery which surrounded a tower that communicated with the Castle by an isthmus covered with a portico, and guarded by iron balustrades, thither I repaired; but ere I reached the spot, confused murmurs, rising ever and anon into loud acclamations, made me quicken my pace. The first object that demanded my attention was a figure in armour scaling the walls of the tower, not only unmolested, but actually assisted in his design by a concourse of young traitors, who, waving their arbalats, hailed the adventurous warrior with shouting praises, and tokens of the warmest admiration. Thunderstruck at this apparent defection of Montford's troops, I rushed forwards

with uplifted javelin and firm intent to hurl the daring soldier from the height he had thus miraculously gained, when Vincent, darting from the clamorous throng, seized my arm, and cried, 'he is not a foe, my Lord, suffer him to ascend—he is but one—suspend the stroke; if his arms are shook in menace, then dispatch him, then let your ire light on him; but by the sacred host of Heaven I know his arms, I know his drift, and swear that this contrivance bodes a favourable transition to the house of Lancaster; I may not disclose who it is, but when he lifts his beaver you will bless my interposition.' By this the stranger had reached the summit, and was gratulated by the admiring soldiers with reiterated bursts of approbation.

He beckoned to Vincent, who, separating the warlike multitude with a motion of his hand, led the way; the

stranger silently followed. Interested by his uncommon appearance, for his coat of mail was a rare piece of antiquity, and the boy's words, yet somewhat alarmed at the mode of his introducing himself into the Castle; I bent my steps to the spot where Vincent had conducted him. The youth, leaving the stranger at some little distance, advanced to Lancaster, who was still engaged with Norman, and entreated a moment's private conference for yon warrior. Montford, to my surprise, without the smallest hesitation or inquiry who was the petitioner, nodded assent to Vincent's request; when, shocked at the effects that might arise from this easy confidence in a man in whose motives, by this clandestine mode of procedure, might lurk the foulest treachery, I hastily interposed, and positively insisted on his revealing his purposes for entering the Castle before the troops assembled. Norman O'Con-

nor, stimulated by the ferocity of his inclinations, proposed the regarding him as a spy, and putting him to instant death, without hearkening to whatever plea he might advance in his vindication; and was actually stepping towards him with menacing looks and gestures, when he, still preserving the strictest taciturnity, laid hold of me by the wrist, and pointing to a small door that led to the guard-room, seemed to invite me thither. Curiosity, and a dawning of the truth, urged me to acquiesce to his entreaties. I consented to follow; but, in preparation for the worst, held my weapon to his breast. Lancaster persisted in accompanying us, but desired Norman and his troops to remain where they were until his return. On our entrance into the room the ambiguous stranger closed the door, and barred it, then deliberately laid down his buckler, from which had been forced the champion's device; this

made an unseemly chasm in the broad expanse of iron, incased with massy plates of gold, that adorned this shield, uncommon for its extensive size and unusual richness of workmanship. He then unbuckled his casque, and with some little difficulty, for the steel, which might once have borne the height of polish, was now wretchedly defaced with rust, laid on by the joint hand of time and neglect, took it off, and presented to our view the features of Stratton. Montford, with the utmost perturbation, quickly required the meaning of this unlooked-for appearance, and the useless mystery he had assumed? 'This is no season to give satisfactory replies. I am come hither as interrogator. Why,' continued he sternly, addressing us both, 'why did you violate your promise to me, by constraining the further attendance of a youth for whose preservation I am accountable to his father? I entrusted him to

you, and am come to claim him at your hands. Praise be to Heaven he has escaped unhurt! but that does not exculpate you from the charge of interested thoughtlessness. Young men, you have not characteristically, in this instance, requited the good offices of a father, as I judged you would. You may think this accusation both frivolous and trifling; but know, that whilst I am now speaking, a parent is suffering the agonies of suspence as to the fate of his only son.' This reproof, though harsh and unpleasant, lost the moiety of its severity by being strictly just. I attempted excuses; but having no foundation whereon to build them, they fell to nought.

Lancaster replied, in his defence to Stratton's charge, that the dismissal of Vincent had totally fled his memory previous to the Castle's being invested, and that taking place, all chance of

scape was unavoidably precluded.—
Permit me to assist your memory,' replied Stratton; 'prithee declare by what means was Lord Cornwall, when he had escorted the female train to Porchester, supposing the enemy had commenced the siege, to have been readmitted into the Castle?'

I was struck speechless. That this circumstance should have fled my mind was most extraordinary, and almost staggered my belief that there was actually such a passage, or that I had marked it as favourable to my own resolves. Montford, to whom conviction also flashed, hastily quitted us, with intent to seek Vincent. At his departure a sudden glow of animation overspread the face of Stratton, and chased the unbenign frown from his brow. 'Let me avail myself of this moment,' cried he impatiently, 'to explain to you the essential motive for my coming to Ke-

nilworth. Great as the urgency was on Vincent's account, you, who, I think, look beyond the surface, cannot but be sensible some latent magnet has attracted me hither, independent of what I owed my duty as guardian to the boy. Know, then, I am here pursuant to the general rules I have laid down whereon to act whilst I remain in this life; these I have hitherto most strictly adhered to, and now, in conformity to them, I come to put a stop to this wanton waste of blood. I most solemnly adjure you, as you tender your future happiness, to prove yourself a real friend to Lancaster, by joining me in endeavours, which I pronounce blessed and laudable, to quell this faction, and restore peace. So well am I acquainted with the texture of the Earl's mind, from the little I have seen of him, that I was persuaded, had I opened my purpose to him immediately on my arrival, he would have turned deaf to all I could

have advanced, and perhaps spurned me for my presumptuous interference; but the just form of censure, relative to Vincent, that I brought full against him, hath tempered his spirit, and given me an ascendancy over him, which I will now exert to my utmost, to procure the desirable end of ultimately securing his welfare.

Ere I could reply Lancaster rejoined us, saying he had given full instructions to Vincent, had seen him to the hither door of the subterraneous passage, and least the youth, who shewed great repugnance at leaving the Castle, should, to gratify his martial inclinations, since he could not obtain re-admittance within the walls, join the enemy without, he had dispatched Conrad, his Sub-lieutenant, to take the charge of him to his father, at Winchester Castle. Montford likewise added, that he had discerned a general movement in the

camp, which induced him to believe that Edward was preparing to renew the attack. 'Then I'll away with all argumentative introduction,' cried Stratton, 'and strike at the point at once. Wherefore this effusion of human blood? What view have you to answer, in thus persevering in widening a breach made conjunctively in peace by both parties? Who is he who would wilfully stir up strife but him that had, anterior to embracing the sanguinary tenets, banished every divine precept from his breast? Doth religion command thee? Wherefore war you thus? Is it in conformity to the sophistical doctrine of contending despots, who, whilst they spur on their slaves inhumanly to violate all human ties, declare it is to secure prosperity and peace? But expand your intellects, loose the bands of Bigotry, let Reason sway. If you plant brambles, you are not to expect lilies but thorns. Is it through am-

bition, to magnify the name of Lancaster, and place it to crown the top of Glory's page, that you persist in these adverse proceedings? Oh, stop thy aspiring soar, lest the potential sun of royalty melt the cement of thy pinions, and thou fallest! Those who drink at Ambition's fount, though they gain a proportionate degree of exaltation at each luscious draught, are not aware they may drink too deep; they know not when, but there is a time that, if they insatiably gratify their thirst for one drop more, all their crested hopes are dashed for ever. Is despair the incentive that lends you wings to take this desperate flight to destruction? If so, drive it from you; despair is alike unworthy of the brave or pious. Go forth, be truly conqueror to your foes, by throwing down the hostile blade, and extending the friendly olive.'

Thus far Lancaster permitted him to continue until he learned his drift: this understood, he replied, betwixt anger and merriment, 'A pleasant proposal this truly! why, Stratton, you do not seriously imagine that I will surrender my lawful possessions and dearest liberties voluntarily to Edward?' 'By exerting all your force and violence, can you ensure a certainty of their being granted to you?' demanded Stratton. 'No,' replied Montford, carelessly, 'it depends upon the caprice of Fortune, whether she will diffuse her smiles on me or on my adversary.' 'This admitted, are you competent, in a numerous and staunch garrison, and a sufficient quantity of arms and necessaries, to hold this fortress till Edward, wearied with your intrepid spirit of firm and valorous defence, yields to terms, and the re-instating you in your pristine rights?' 'Yes,' replied Lancaster, 'hitherto I looked

upon my cause as hopeless; but though the magazines are nearly vacant, yet, by the above-mentioned passage whence Vincent escaped, I will send an armed number to procure provisions from the neighbouring hamlets.'

'Do so,' returned Stratton coolly, 'it will be a rare exploit of policy and stratagem, if they can accomplish it. When the magazines are replenished, no doubt you may procrastinate the siege until you constrain the enemy to accede to your own conditions.'

Lancaster heard not this taunt, given in a voice of scoffing irony, for a reproach it was evidently meant, having walked forwards to the south bastion, to deliberate with Norman upon the expediency of this expedition. Stratton, desiring me not to mention his name, or expect reply when addressed, clapped on his helmet, and mo-

tioned me to follow. We overtook Montford, who had struck into a gallery leading to the west ramparts:—here the first persons he encountered were Conrad in discourse with Norman, and Vincent conjointly with Eustace de Erickblane, practising their arrows on a colossal of Caractacus that stood in a niche over the gate-way. They had not only dexterously contrived to shoot away several of the fingers, but mutilate every feature in the face, and were now aiming their mischievous darts at the chains that encircled his wrists. Montford, who thought it was impossible but that Conrad and Vincent were by this time nigh unto Winchester, stood silent in amaze, until the former, quitting Norman, apologized to Montford for not having attended him the instant of his return, by saying he was informed that his Lord was in earnest conference with a stranger. Conrad proceeded to acquaint him, that when

Vincent and himself reached the further end of the subterraneous defile, voices on the outward side, distinctly heard, caused them to stop and attentively listen; from the words they caught, it was clearly demonstrable that the besiegers had discovered this entrance to the Castle, and had placed a numerous guard to defend it; but that the door of communication was so formidably fastened on the inside by bars of iron and enormous padlocks, that they defied the utmost force. Stratton, who had given ear to this explanation of a circumstance so natural in itself, but which seemed to Lancaster of supernatural tendency, made signs to me, and we returned to the guard room.

'I was unconscious of this accident,' said he, 'it is true, but thought it highly probable the enemy might employ a search, and avail themselves of such an

important pass; the scouts and peasants that Lord Lancaster had dispatched for provisions I met in my way to Kenilworth, and learnt from them what passed within the Castle, prior to their being intercepted by the royal army, which made every man of them prisoners without a single blow exchanged. Think then what he has to trust to.' Here Montford rejoined us, and shuting the door with a rude swing, threw himself against the wall with folded arms, as was his usual manner when ought occurred to ruffle his temper. 'Satan sure abets the foe,' muttered he. 'Then why not,' replied Stratton calmly, 'overpower Satan and your foes by gaining Heaven to your interest?' 'I will not stigmatize my name, and bring everlasting dishonour on my memory,' replied Montford, fiercely, 'by committing an action of the basest kind.'

'Then fight against Satan,' retorted Stratton, 'the aid of Heaven is not to be purchased by blood.' He turned away, and addressing me, continued, 'To explain the mystic mode of my introduction I should acquaint you that I purposed revealing myself the moment I had gained a footing within the Castle, but that I, from the battlements where he fought, distinguished a man to whom I wish not to trust my voice or features; his name is Norman O'Connor, a native of Ireland, by trade a barge-builder. How you have contracted an acquaintance with him I know not, but since you appear to be on some par of intimacy, learn that he is strictly gallant and valorous, according to the worldly interpretation of these appellations. His daring soul is as intrepid and resolute as his person is athletic and robust. If you have conciliated his friendship be careful to preserve it, and he will, in your

worst fortunes, prove a fixed and steady bulwark of constancy; but if once his unvaried fidelity is suspected, or you chance to treat him with the slightest shew of injustice, you fling away a jewel never to be recovered. His good-will is staunch, but his inexorable spirit of wrathful enmity extends beyond the grave, and affects even those that acknowledge consanguinity. Thus he stands with me: I never harmed him by thought or deed, yet though the aggrievance was committed by a relative, and that not to himself, though our births, fates, and misfortunes nearly resemble each other, and though the event took place long ere either of us saw the light, yet such is the resentment and implacability of his stubborn nature, that did he know I still existed he would shun me with all the vindictive hatred that he would shew against one who had personally wronged him.'

Montford, wholly engrossed with the retrospection of his future prospects, now started from his position, and traversed the room, exclaiming, 'What, what shall be done?' Stratton, who possessed the clue that enabled him to penetrate through the abstruse and mazy windings leading to the heart of man, now showed the measure that he wished Lancaster to take to emerge from this bitter flood of wayward fortunes, in so fair a light, and seem so much more congenial to his fallacious ideas of honour, by anteriorly advising him to have recourse to a project so extravagant and inhuman, that he was full confident it never would be listened to.

The lady Johanna, (whom I have mentioned above) born to Edward ere his marriage with Isabel, had, some time previous to our arrival at Kenilworth, accepted the earnest invitation of

the late Countess of Lancaster to retire from court, and shun a malific step-dame, who, consonant to her pernicious principles, but most undeservedly, hated the gentle maid. Although his Highness had ever treated her with the respectful tenderness of a parent, yet the cankered spirit of the Queen, as it could not suffer her to enjoy content herself, prompted her to diffuse the baleful effects of her rancour and malevolence on all that fell within the vortex of her displeasure.

Stratton's proposition then was, in imitation of many glorious heroes of antiquity, to bring the youthful Princess to the ramparts, and in sight of her friends, her relatives, and her father, to stand sacrificator, and point the flaming steel at the bared throat of the lovely victim. This sight alone,' pursued he, 'will bring the Monarch to your terms; torture but the affections

of the parent on the rack of incertitude, and you may command concessions; but should he even harken to the honied poison of Isabel's wily tongue, and uxoriously allow the maid to bleed——' 'Cease, cease this idle talk,' interrupted Montford; 'rather will I submit to bow me to the Sovereign, and basely crawl at his feet to beseech his clemency, than resort to such a barbarous expedient.'

'There burst forth the radiant soul of mighty Lancaster!' exclaimed Stratton,' in affected rapture of applause; 'that was the emanation of a truly illustrious mind! To return to my first theme,—here you are, immured within these walls, on the verge of actual want; baited without by those whose resources are inexhaustible—Heaven alone knows whether success will attend your attempts at offering terms of accommodation, but if one life is saved by your en-

deavours to place affairs on an amicable footing, it will be a life erased from the heavy debt placed at your account by him above. You cannot expect that Edward will recognize the justice of your cause, or court your friendship; his good will must be sought. It is wisdom, not timidity, to yield to an enemy you cannot cope with; if you had provided with appropriate forecast for the exigencies of your situation, then you might have a shadow of pretence to persevere in this infraction of peace; but before the assault commenced, you were full conscious that it was but a vain setting out to run a course wherein you must return to the spot from whence you started, with the miserable addition to your despair, that many that joined you in your career had perished. As I understand, you, pursuant to the dictates of humanity and justice, prior to the enemy appearing in sight, expressly enjoined those

to leave the Castle whose desires were repugnant to the stay; to their honour be it said, they expressed a determined resolution to support you with their powers; but in lieu of taking advantage of their generous test of fealty, you should arise above the mean of gratifying your party views and animosities, and spare the sacrifice of a human hecatomb to the idol of your name. If the attack re-commences, inevitable ruin must fall upon yourselves and dependants; you will not only bring destruction on your own head, but be the stimulator of murder, parricide, and all the diversified ills attached to civil war; for instance—you have at present among your troops a young man whose name is William of Lumley; his father is at this instant commander of a legion in the enemy's van; neither are acquainted with this circumstance, and they may still re-

main ignorant until the father's faulchion pierces the breast of the youth, or the son's dart flies and stamps the sender a parricide:—reflect ere too late, hoist a banner of truce, suffer me to be the mediator, grant me specific directions, and I will fulfil, to the utmost of my abilities, the powers with which you entrust me; the terms shall be your own dictating. I will go forth alone, and engage not only to procure your free pardon, but the exculpation of all those that have revolted to your party.'

These most righteous, moderate, and pious reasonings made my cheeks to glow with sensations of honest shame, at not having anticipated this man's disinterested conduct; but not to be accused of a greater fault, by reprobating what I had failed first proposing, I eagerly participated in it, and

mplored Lancaster to accede to Stratton's offer.

Satisfactorily to both our desires, but contrary to our most sanguine expectations, after many expostulations illustrative of the critical state of his situation, and delusive arguments on his side to prove why it was justifiable in him to delay all thoughts of adjustment, he suffered himself to be overruled, and in the end deputed Stratton to stand medium betwixt him and Edward. He next stipulated terms; these, however, appeared to us to be rather too high sounding, formal, and harsh, from a weak rebel to a vigorous potentate. Stratton, motioning me to silence, at first acquiesced to all he brought forward, as equitable, but by degrees, artfully wound him round to a lower tone; so that, in fine, the proffered conditions were brought to some degree

of consistency. This glorious point gained, the ensign of parley was raised on the south minoret, and a detachment attended Stratton to the gates, who, leaving them at the foot of the draw-bridge, followed by a herald, advanced alone to the royal camp.

END OF VOLUME THE FIRST.